

ISSUE 44 ★ NOV/DEC 1986

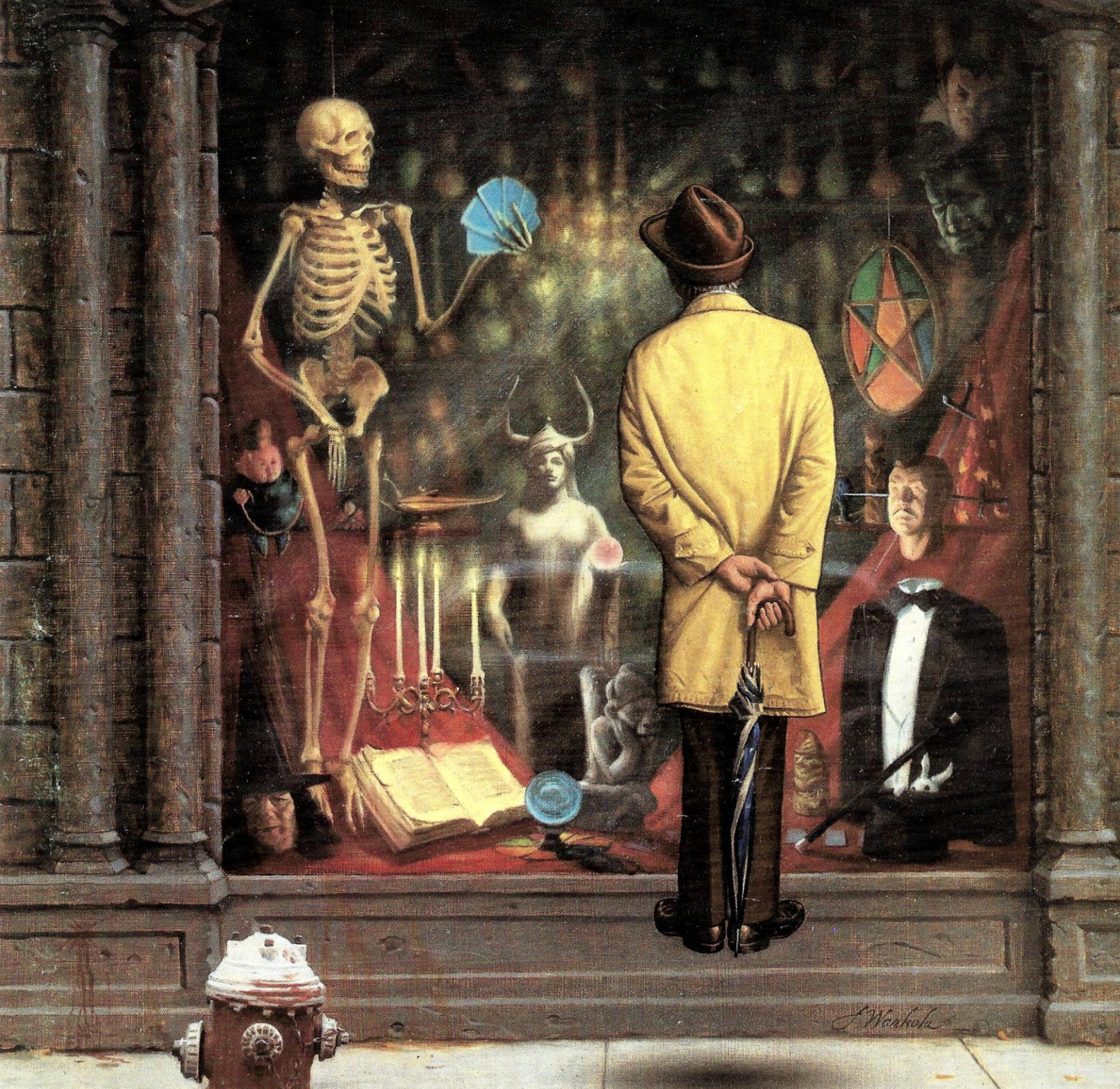
# Different Worlds

JOURNAL OF ADVENTURE GAMING

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# Conventions

Conventions are the best places to meet new gamers. Organizers should send details of their convention at least six months prior to the event for announcement in this column.

If you wish to see your convention listed in Different Worlds, send us the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact, the number of attendees expected, and the number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service.

## Philcon 86

November 14-16, 1986

At the Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia PA. Science fiction. Contact: The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, PO Box 8303, 30th St Sta, Philadelphia PA 19101.

## UNIVERSE 87

January 2-4, 1987

At the Airport Hilton & Towers, Los Angeles CA. Adventure gaming. Contact: UNIVERSE 87, PO Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804, (213) 920-8705.

## WARCON 87

February 6-8, 1987

At the Texas A&M Univ, Clg Sta TX. Gaming. Contact: WARCON 87, c/o MSC NOVA, Texas A&M Univ, Clg Sta TX 77841.

## DunDraCon XI

February 13-16, 1987

At the Oakland Airport Hyatt Hotel. Gaming. Contact: DunDraCon XI, 386 Alcatraz Ave, Oakland CA 94618.

## ORCCON 1987

February 13-16, 1987

At the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: ORCCON 1987, DT1, PO Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

## Folie-Con

February 27-28, March 1, 1987

At the Ramada Inn, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Gaming. Contact: Folie-Con, 4651 Berri, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2J 2R6.

## Magnum Opus Con 2

March 27-29, 1987

At the Columbus Iron Works and Convention Ctr, Columbus GA. Science fiction. Contact: Roland Castle, 4315 Pio Nono Ave, Macon GA 31206.

## Alascon VIII

March 28-29, 1987

At the Univ of Alaska, Fairbanks

AK. Gaming. Contact: Alascon VIII, PO Box 80925, Fairbanks AK 99708.

## CoastCon X

March 28-30, 1987

At the Coast Coliseum and Convention Ctr, Biloxi MS. Gaming. Contact: CoastCon, PO Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

## Miscon II

May 15-17, 1987

At the Quality Inn, Missoula MT. Science fiction/fantasy/gaming. Contact: Miscon II, c/o WMSFC, PO Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807.

## GamesCaucus

May 22-25, 1987

At the Airport Hilton, Oakland CA. Gaming. Contact: GamesCaucus, 1550 Benton St (C), Alameda CA 94501, (415) 865-3668.

## GAMEX 1987

May 22-25, 1987

At the Pasadena Hilton Hotel, Pasadena CA. Gaming. Contact: GAMEX 1987, DT1, PO Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213)

420-3675.

## Neo-Vention VI

June 5-7, 1987

At the Student Union, Kent State Univ, Kent OH. Gaming. Contact: NEO-GS, PO Box 412, Cuyahoga Fls OH 44222-0412.

## GATEWAY 1987

September 4-7, 1987

At the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: GATEWAY 1987, DT1, PO Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

For further information contact the convention organizers directly.

## NEXT ISSUE

### CTHULHU SPECIAL

"Call Of Cthulhu  
in the Eighties"

"Occult Organizations  
of the 1920's"

and more!!!

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# DW Poll Results

Results of  
poll taken in  
Issue 42.

## "THE DW TOP TWENTY"

### ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Title	Rating	Resp.
1. Call Of Cthulhu (Chaosium)	7.74	100%
2. Pendragon (Chaosium)	7.50	74%
3. Paranoia (West End)	7.27	56%
4. RuneQuest (Avalon Hill)	7.13	100%
5. Ringworld (Chaosium)	7.11	46%
6. Toon (Steve Jackson)	7.08	64%
7. Stormbringer (Chaosium)	7.05	51%
8. James Bond 007 (Victory)	7.00	56%
9. Star Trek: The RPG (FASA)	6.83	59%
10. Twilight: 2000 (GDW)	6.75	41%
11. DC Heroes (Mayfair)	6.64	58%
12. Danger International (Hero)	6.63	42%
13. Fantasy Hero (Hero)	6.50	42%
13. Swordbearer (FGU)	6.50	42%
15. Champions (Hero)	6.42	67%
16. Traveller (GDW)	6.37	87%
17. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Palladium)	6.33	47%
18. Superworld (Chaosium)	6.31	33%
19. Chill (Pacesetter)	6.25	41%
20. Morrow Project (Timeline)	6.15	33%

### GAME MODULES

Title	Rating	Resp.
1. Send in Clones (West End)	8.00	32%
2. Pendragon Campaign (Chaosium)	7.27	58%
3. Goldfinger (Victory)	7.07	36%
4. Ravenloft (TSR)	7.00	37%
4. Haven (Gamelords)	7.00	21%
6. Cities (Midkemia)	6.86	36%
7. Handbook of Tricks & Traps (Dragon Tree)	6.83	31%
8. City Book (Blade)	6.71	44%
9. Aslan (GDW)	6.63	42%
9. Harn (Columbia)	6.63	42%
11. The Klingons (FASA)	6.60	26%
11. Lands Of Mystery (Hero)	6.60	26%
11. Spinward Marches Campaign (GDW)	6.60	26%
11. Thrilling Locations (Victory)	6.60	26%
15. Masks Of Nyarlathotep (Chaosium)	6.50	53%
15. Pavis (Chaosium)	6.50	53%
15. Stormhaven (Blade)	6.50	21%
18. Shadows of Yog-Sothoth (Chaosium)	6.44	47%
19. Trail Of Tsathogghua (Chaosium)	6.33	47%
19. Elves (Mayfair)	6.33	31%



# Editorial

The Adventurer

## ADVENTURE GAMING GOES INTERNATIONAL

IN THE past two years adventure gaming has spread its wings and reached international shores.

*Call Of Cthulhu* and *Junta* is now available in Japanese. Sweden, France, and Italy boast games originating from their own countries that are being considered for translation into English.

The U.S., Canada, Australia, and the U.K. lead the world in adventure game design, but not far behind are Japan, France, and Italy with their own respective game industries.

*Different Worlds* itself is distributed in Canada, the U.K., Sweden, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Australia. It has subscribers in Ireland, Denmark, Finland, and India. *DW* has even been seen sold

on the French Riviera. Adventure gaming doesn't have the following that chess has—*USA Today* is covering the Kasparov-Karpov world chess championship—but it does have the potential of generating much more active participants.

Time has come for us to consider a future ORIGINS held in London.

Though we have seen adventure gaming's peak during the *Dungeons & Dragons* years, I foresee the hobby to continue growing at a steady rate, never to die, but to always be there, and for us to enjoy the rest of our lives.

Happy gaming,

*Tadashi Ehara*

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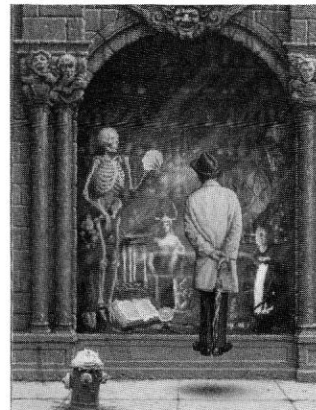
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### "Magic For Sale"

By James Warhola

From a collection of short stories by the same name edited by Avram Davidson (Berkley Books). Part of an exhibition of fantastic art at the Delaware Art Museum.



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THE SWORD  
of  
Hollywood

The pen is mightier than the sword,  
So they say,  
How about the camera?

By  
LARRY Di TILLO

*Aloha, adorers of the animated photograph! Boy, is my face crimson after some of the dubious info I've laid on you the past year. I suppose only my most devoted readers know to what I'm referring, but for them a few explanations and apologies are in order (the rest of you can go suck troll pellets).*

First off the apologia board is my premature announcement of *ElfQuest* as an animated series. As you all know by now, *ElfQuest* never did make it to the tiny tube. Friend J. Michael Straczynski and I worked on the project for six months, taking meetings with the CBS brass and Wendy Pini, always with the assurance that the series was a definite go. Then disaster struck. The powers that be suddenly decided the show should be an 8:30 show instead of the 11:30 show for which it had been designed. The difference should be apparent to any cartoon fan: early morning shows are designed for tiny tots; they're replete with cuteness and sweetness and fuzzy animals. The later hours are designed for older kids; that's where your action-adventure shows dominate. Naturally we received this "change of direction" with a good bit of confusion (actually, pal J. Michael turned several shades of quite astonishing purple). We and the Pini had envisioned a series much like the books: lots of adventure and wry humor laced into stories with significant meaning. CBS apparently saw the word "elves" and said, "Oh yeah, cute pointy-eared things; they'll make great plush dolls; it's for little kids." We did get as far as a pilot script, not a bad piece of work, but the upshot was "Still too much action, where's the cute?" In essence it was as if they'd bought *Moby Dick* and decided to turn it into *Flipper*. Oh, well, that's par for the network course. My apologies to eager *ElfQuest* fans for whetting your appetite, but believe me you would never have liked it their way.

Okay, so much for real inside gossip. My next *faux pas* occurred in last issue's column when I "pre-viewed" some upcoming releases, including *Labyrinth*, *Short Circuit*, and *Legend*. All three of these films opened well in advance of that column, partly my fault, partly the fault of the *Different Worlds*' schedule. At the time I penned the column, those films were slated for late summer. Instead they opened early. There was no way to pull the column, so unhappily you wound up being told to anticipate movies which had already run. Sorry, I try to make news timely, but it's not always possible given the delay between when I get the column in and when the issue comes out.

Apologies over. Time for acknowledgement. To fan Anthony Gresham who wrote to tell me he'd seen my cartoon work on *He-Man*, *Shera*, and *Jayce and the Wheeled Warriors*, thanks. I agree the *Jayce* stuff is the best of the lot, mainly because of superior animation and stories. To fan and fellow scribe Linda Woeltjen, thanks for the egoboo concerning my column on "characterization" in games and films. I am glad you found it useful. And that's it. If you want to see your name in print, write!

Oh, by the way, looks like the baby boom has hit *DW*. Not only has Ye Ol' Editor become a dad, but Ye Ol' Sword is likewise about to enter the hallowed halls of fatherhood. Daughter Jessica Morgana (Jessica for Lady Jessica of *Dune* fame, Morgana for you know who) is due any day now and to say I'm excited is to understate the case. The first thing she's gonna have to learn is to roll dice of course.

Personal announcements aside, let's delve into some film and gaming meat, with another patented Sword Mini-Rap. Today's topic is imagery. Film is a visual medium, it makes its impact through what we see, i.e., imagery. But what about games? How can we pay heed to imagery

in a pastime that's largely cerebral? Glad you asked!

Games may not have the benefit of millions of dollars in special effects or the eye of a first-rate cinematographer, but they have something just as useful—active imagination. Utilizing the big screen of the mind, a quality gamemaster can instill all sorts of dynamic imagery into his or her games. The key factors in accomplishing this are detail and effect. Let's start with detail.

Film creates its imagery through sets, costumes, lighting, and photographic composition. Now I don't suggest you start building life-size dungeon corridors or demanding all your players dress in costume, but I do suggest you give thought to visual details in game play, preferably before you run a scenario. Let's take a common example—a group of adventurers approach a castle. In a film, we'd see the castle. There might be thunderclouds overhead, the sky may erupt with lightning every now and again, there may be bats fluttering over a turret or a vulture perched in a dead tree nearby. Its detail would tell the viewers what the castle's all about: it's ominous, spooky, and probably bristling with adventure. This in turn is reflected by the actors, our group of adventurers, who now tell us something about themselves in the way they react to this spooky castle. In short, the imagery contributes to the story. Can you say the same about the last time your adventurers approached a castle. Or a town? Or any location where action was to take place? If the answer is no, you're not paying attention to visual detail that can contribute to the gaming experience. Next time you write a scenario up or run a published module, think about it. Consider each important location and what visual details might enhance your players' appreciation of it. Do weird lights flicker on and off? Is the surrounding area deserted or are there people about? Is the weather unusual in the area? Is

there a fog, a storm, a chilling cold (all of which can be recounted as visual details). The goal is to set in the players' minds an atmosphere which will instill feeling in them. Which leads us directly to effect.

What do you want the players to feel in any specific portion of your scenario? What effect do you want your imagery to have? In our little common example we went for an easy one—fear, the icy twinge of the unknown. All too many games lack that effort. Players are scared of nothing. They have their magical jockey shorts and their wands of tofu-repelling; they're ready for anything. However, with the right imagery, even the biggest brick can get the shakes. But what about other emotions? For example trust, revulsion, love, awe, joy. Again, imagery can help. Careful attention to what a character looks like, what bodily gestures he or she makes, what symbols and equipment he or she wears can all create an effect in players. It's positively dynamic in playing nasty tricks on players—an innocent-looking maiden is trusted because of her appearance though she's in reality a were creature. A mortally-wounded cleric, lifting his holy symbol to the skies as blood flows from his body, extracts a deathbed promise from a party that lands them in a hotbed of evil (the cleric is of course one of the bad guys). Imagery also applies to player-characters, the more visual an idea a player has of his character, the better the gamemaster can use his looks for role-playing situations. In addition, the greatest help to a gamemaster in choosing imagery is knowing the players well, not as characters but just as people. If you know your buddy has a fear of squids, a juicy description of a squid-like tentacle reaching toward that player's character is going to affect him.

I'm fast running out of room here and before I wrap it up, I've got to mention a few films whose

Continued on page 17

# Have you switched yet to the #1 role-playing system?

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# Book Reviews

Reviews of books with interesting world settings useful for creating imaginative role-playing campaigns.

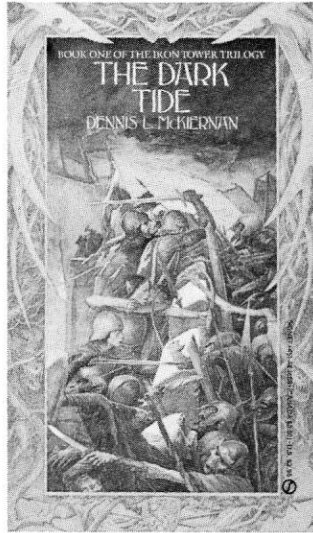
## The Iron Tower Trilogy THE DARK TIDE SHADOWS OF DOOM THE DARKEST DAY

By Dennis L. McKiernan  
(Signet)

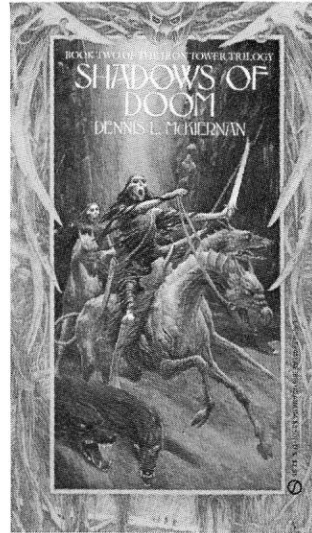
Reviewed by E.S. Erkes

When you consider the immense popularity and influence of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, it's surprising that very few Tolkien pastiches have appeared; few writers have gone "into the ring" with Tolkien in the same way that, say, Karl Edward Wagner and John Jakes went into the ring with Robert E. Howard. This is not to say that Tolkien hasn't produced surface imitators. Indeed, since the appearance of *The Lord of the Rings* we've seen an avalanche of elves, wizards, dragons, and magic rings, in every medium. But the number of writers who have attempted to actually match Tolkien's achievement remains small.

So we have Dennis McKiernan's Iron Tower Trilogy, which is the purest and best Tolkien pastiche yet produced. Stephen Donaldson



is a better prose writer than McKiernan, but he is not quite trying to do the same thing, while Terry Brooks is just not a good writer. McKiernan has studied Tolkien well, and hits most of the right notes. He works hard to capture the same atmosphere as the Tolkien books, most notably the sense of dread engendered by the forces of the Enemy, and the feeling of involvement in a grand



crusade to fight it.

Hitting most of the right notes, however, is not the same thing as producing your own notes. Tolkien's vision came from an encyclopedic knowledge of linguistics and various folklores, while McKiernan's seem to come from an encyclopedic knowledge of Tolkien. Most of the lead characters in the trilogy are hobbit-like

creatures called warrows, who are typically underestimated by their compatriot men, elves, and dwarves in the struggle against the forces of the Dark Lord Modru. Actually, this trilogy would probably be easier for the general reader to get through than Tolkien's, in that McKiernan gets immediately into the heart of the story; the basic situation is stated on the third page of the first book. That long, charming first chapter of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which deters so many casual readers, has no parallel here. And that's part of the problem.

So many of the little cultural details that brought *The Lord of the Rings* to life are missing here: McKiernan's songs and poems, for example, are pretty awful. The overall effect is comparable to looking at the work of an illustrator who learned to draw not by taking art lessons but by studying *Saturday Evening Post* covers. But nonetheless I recommend this work highly. There are scenes here which will make you feel the same way you felt the first time you read Tolkien, and I can't think of higher praise for a trilogy such as this. □

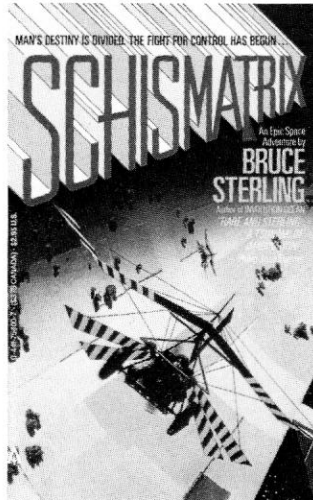
## SCHISMATRIX

By Bruce Sterling  
(Ace \$2.95)

Reviewed by David Dunham

I picked up this book because I found out that a friend of mine had played in Bruce Sterling's fantasy campaign. The campaign sounded extraordinarily imaginative, and I sympathized with my friend when he said that Bruce wasn't running his campaign any more, concentrating instead on books. While my friend has reason to be unhappy, the rest of us can be glad.

*Schismatrix* is set in the Solar System of 250 years from now. It is filled with decaying, artificial habitats at the Trojan points, the asteroid belt, Saturn's rings. Earth is under Interdict. Humanity is split into two superpowers, the Shapers, experts in biotechnology (all Shaper women are beautiful, thanks to genetic manipulation), and the Mechanists, masters of cybernetics (Mechs rebuild damaged limbs, and install biofeedback readouts). There are smaller independents, such as the Geisha



Bank and the Black Medicals. On an individual level, there are the sundogs: "defectors, traitors, exiles, outlaws." In short, an adventure class.

The book is about the efforts of Abelard Lindsay to survive and prosper while caught in the middle of the Mech-Shaper cold war, after being exiled from his own lunar republic. The solar

system is a politically turbulent place, and Lindsay's fortunes change frequently. Although most of the story is political and physical action, it's not without occasional wry humor—we find out exactly what one 6-sided die of damage is.

*Schismatrix* is a must-read for science-fiction gamemasters because of its flood of detail. There's a 215 year-old spaceship with acoustic readouts. Video monocles become fashionable. There's a weather station in

Saturn's rings. Cockroaches form an important part of a spaceship's ecology, and there's an immortal rat. Digestive bacteria must be changed when visiting a different habitat. There are a wide assortment of drugs, implants, and robots. Everything fits together and makes sense.

Not only is this a stirring book which was hard to put down, it makes me want to start a role-playing game using it for background. *Schismatrix* is well worth reading. □

## "TIME MACHINE"

Reviewed by W. Peter Miller

Welcome to the world of time travel. Bantam Books and Byron Preiss have published a series of book adventures called the "Time Machine." This is a nicely illustrated series that takes the reader on excursions mainly into the past. Each book challenges the reader with a specific mission to be fulfilled. This mission usually regards witnessing some key moment in the past or in verifying that some event did happen.

The books are of the "Choose Your Own Path" numbered-page variety. At the end of each chapter you must make a choice between several different paths given to you by the Time Machine. Different choices lead to different adventures in time.

The books start by introducing the four rules of Time Travel. They are:

*To avoid killing anything, be it animal or human.*

*To avoid changing history. You must never leave any items in*

the past.

To avoid arousing suspicion when you jump in time. Do not take people along with you while jumping in time.

To only pick from the choices given in the book, and to abide by the Time Machine's instructions.

After the rules of Time Travel the book will tell you about your mission and give you some background on the period in history to which you will be traveling. Then you are issued equipment. Sometimes you will be given options as to what equipment to take.

The "Data Bank" then follows which gives you more specific information on the time in which you will be adventuring. This includes specific clues you will need to complete your mission.

There is also a "Data File" in the back of the book which you can check if you feel you need help in making a specific decision.

From the four rules of Time Travel, and the nature of the adventures, it becomes obvious that these are missions of non-violent exploration. In fact, in all of the books, I have never seen an option that would allow you to break one of the four rules. This is not to say that there is not a sense of danger, for there is adventure aplenty.

I hesitate in calling these books "games," because there is only one "player" (the reader) and because there is no winning or losing involved. Sometimes it might take you a little longer to get through one book than another, but eventually you will find your way and solve the puzzle. There are times when you can get stuck in a time loop where you keep going back to the same places and you feel like you'll never get unstuck. But there is always some way out that you hadn't seen before and eventually you'll complete your mission. The difficulty and relative quality of the individual books will be discussed below.

### **Time Machine 1: SECRET OF THE KNIGHTS** *By Jim Gasperini*

This book has the reader on a mission to become a knight and then discover how The Order of the Garter, a famous group of knights, got their name.

This is a good solid book. The quest isn't made too hard or too easy. Chances are you will make some wrong decisions, but at the same time you feel like you are progressing toward your goal. I found it refreshing to be adventuring in an authentic medieval setting after all of the fantasy games on the market.

### **Time Machine 2: SEARCH FOR DINOSAURS** *By David Bischoff*

In this book the reader is on a mission to photograph the first bird, Archaeopteryx. In order to achieve that, you go exploring when dinosaurs ruled the earth.

This is one of the better books. The dinosaurs are brought vividly to life, and the illustrations are wonderful. The dinosaurs are portrayed according to current theories. They are active, exciting, and unique individuals—not the stodgy, slow giant lizard of most fiction.

### **Time Machine 3: SWORD OF THE SAMURAI** *By Michael Reaves & Steve Perry*

Go back to Japan in the 17th century and bring back the sword of Miyamoto Musashi, one of the most famous samurai warriors. That is the task to be completed in this book.

This is my favorite of all the Time Machine books because of the beautiful writing of Reaves and Perry. Their writing has a way of drawing you into the samurai culture. In order to complete your mission you must learn to think like a samurai. Because of that, the whole culture feels real, and the seemingly strange customs of ancient Japan are more understandable and accessible.

### **Time Machine 4: SAIL WITH PIRATES** *By Jim Gasperini*

Exploring the glory of the high seas during the age of privateers and exploration of the New World is the setting for this adventure. The mission is to find the wreck of the *Our Lady of the Pure and Immaculate Conception*, a Spanish ship. This ship carried the largest cargo of silver to ever leave the New World. Locating the wreck and returning with a piece of its treasure will complete your mission.

This book took me longer to finish than any of the others. I don't think it is necessarily the most difficult, but there are many choices, and some of them are not obvious. Despite the frustrations of being stuck in several time-loops this book was quite an enjoyable read.

### **Time Machine 5: CIVIL WAR SECRET AGENT** *By Steve Perry*

The mission of this book is to travel back to the days just before the Civil War and locate Harriet Tubman, the leader of the Underground Railroad. Once she is found you must determine if she

assisted a slave, Thomas Dean, in escaping from his owners.

This is another one of the better books. Steve Perry brings the era to life, and gives a good picture as to what it must have been like with the Underground Railroad.

### **Time Machine 6: THE RINGS OF SATURN** *By Arthur Byron Cover*

In this book your mission is to discover the source of some mysterious radio transmissions that seem to be originating from somewhere near Saturn. If there is an intelligent life form involved, you decide whether or not mankind should communicate with the aliens.

This is the only book in the series so far to deal with the future. I feel that it is the worst book in the series. The tone of this book is much meaner than any of the others. This book takes the attitude that because this is the future you can screw around all you want with time-lines because nothing in the future has happened yet anyway. This attitude is inconsistent with the rest of the series. To the people of the future you are messing with their past.

I also felt as if I made no mistakes in solving this mission. It was just too easy. The choices were obvious and often at the end of a chapter, there was no choice at all, just go to page X.

On the plus side, the illustrations by Marc Hempel (from First Comics' *MARS* series) and Brian Humphrey portray Cover's future wonderfully in a sort of punk-robotic fashion. And that future is without a doubt the star of this book. It is a future of cloning, cybernetics, and routine space travel. This book is probably best for reference material. The book is not a bad read, it just isn't a good "game."

### **Time Machine 7: ICE AGE EXPLORER** *By Dougal Dixon*

In this book your mission is to find the origin of an animal painted on a prehistoric cave wall. The animal resembles a unicorn and you are to find the painters of the work and if unicorns really existed.

This book swiftly turned into a tedious exercise in wandering through various periods in man's past. This must have been due to the fact that I knew where the paintings were to have been found. So I was frustrated in wandering the globe through all time periods in an effort to get to where I wanted to go. For me this was not one of the better efforts, but readers without the know-

ledge as to the location of the paintings this would probably be a good effort.

### **Time Machine 8: THE MYSTERY OF ATLANTIS**

*By Jim Gasperini*

Did the fabled land of Atlantis exist? And if so, where was it? That is your mission: To search for the origins of the Atlantis myth and to converse with Plato and Homer to find the Lost Continent and to find out why it vanished without a trace.

This book is interesting in that it makes the assumption that there is a rational explanation behind the Atlantis myths. The solution itself is logical enough, but uninteresting. But getting there is certainly a good read. Jim Gasperini has a real knack for incorporating interesting bits of history into his books. Not the best of the series, but not the worst.

### **Time Machine 9: WILD WEST RIDER** *By Stephen Overholser*

In 1860, a method of carrying the mail from Missouri to San Francisco in an unheard of ten days was developed. For eighteen months a relay system of riders and horses carried that mail. Your mission is to discover why the Pony Express stopped carrying the mail.

Again, a little-known period of history is explored. We all know the legends of the Old West from the movies, but how many of us know much about what was really going on. This book gives a little glimpse into that world. I had fun reading this book, although the puzzle wasn't the most difficult. The writing and art are up to the usual Time Machine standards, making this another good book.

### **Final Comments**

It should be apparent that the tone of this series is that "doing good" should be encouraged and rewarded. The right choice is often the one that is just or moral. I like this attitude because it promotes a non-violent atmosphere for gaming.

But the major attraction of this series is a subtle approach to learning some history. In order for the reader to successfully complete their mission they must learn a certain amount of history. The books are history lessons, and good ones. They could be an excellent tool to get kids interested in history. Kids are the target audience of these books. Adults may find them slightly less challenging than the youngster will. On the credit page it suggests that

*Continued on page 16*

# Classics Corner



## THE BASILISK

A Victorian Tale of Terror

By Robert Murray Gilchrist (1868-1917)

Illustrated by  
Walter Moore

MARINA GAVE no sign that she heard my protestation. The embroidery of Venus's hands in her silk picture of The Judgment of Paris was seemingly of greater import to her than the love which almost tore my soul and body asunder. In absolute despair I sat until she had replenished her needle seven times. Then impassioned nature cried aloud:—

"You do not love me!"

She looked up somewhat wearily, as one debarred from rest. "Listen," she said. "There is a creature called a Basilisk, which turns men and women into stone. In my girlhood I saw the Basilisk—I am stone!"

And, rising from her chair, she departed the room, leaving me in amazed doubt as to whether I had heard aright. I had always known of some curious secret in her life: a secret which permitted her to speak of and to understand things to which no

other woman had dared to lift her thoughts. But alas! It was a secret whose influence ever thrust her back from the attaining of happiness. She would warm, then freeze instantly; discuss the purest wisdom, then cease with contemptuous lips and eyes. Doubtless this strangeness had been the first thing to awaken my passion. Her beauty was not of the kind that smites men with sudden craving; it was pale and reposeful, the loveliness of a marble image. Yet, as time went on, so wondrous became her fascination that even the murmur of her swaying garments sickened me with longing. Not more than a year had passed since our first meeting, when I had found her laden with flaming tendrils in the thinned woods of my heritage. A very Dryad, robed in grass colour, she was chanting to the sylvan deities. The invisible web took me, and I became her slave.

Her house lay two leagues from mine. It was a low-built mansion lying in a concave park. The thatch was gaudy with stonecrop and lichen. Amongst the central chimneys a foreign bird sat on a nest of twigs. The long windows blazed with heraldic devices; and paintings of kings and queens and nobles hung in the dim chambers. Here she dwelt with a retinue of aged servants, fantastic women and men half imbecile, who *salaamed* before her with eastern humility and yet addressed her in such terms as gossips use. Had she given them life they could not have obeyed with more reverence. Quaint things the women wrought for her—pomanders and cushions of thistle-down; and the men were never happier than when they could tell her of the first thrush's egg in the thornbush or a sighting of the bitterns that haunted the marsh. She was their goddess and their daughter. Each day had its own routine. In the morning she rode and sang and played; at noon she read in the dusty library, drinking to the full of the dramatists and the platonists. Her own life was such a tragedy as an Elizabethan would have adored. None save her people knew her history, but there were wonderful stories of how she had bowed to tradition, and concentrated in herself the characteristics of a thousand wizard fathers. In the blossom of her youth she had sought strange knowledge, and had tasted thereof, and rued.



The morning after my declaration she rode across her park to the meditating walk I always paced till noon. She was alone, dressed in a habit of white with a loose girdle of blue. As her mare reached the yew hedge, she dismounted, and came to me with more lightness than I had ever beheld in her. At her waist hung a black glass mirror, and her half-bare arms were adorned with cabalistic jewels.

When I knelt to kiss her hand, she sighed heavily. "Ask me nothing," she said. "Life itself is too joyless to be more embittered by explanations. Let all rest between us as now. I will love coldly, you warmly, with no nearer approaching." Her voice rang full of a wistful expectancy: as if she knew that I should combat her half-explained decision. She read me well, for almost ere she had done I cried out loudly against it:—"It can never be so—I cannot breathe—I shall die."

She sank to the moss-covered wall. "Must the sacrifice be made?" she asked, half to herself. "Must I tell him all?" Silence prevailed a while, then turning away her face she said: "From the first I loved you, but last night in the darkness, when I could not sleep for thinking of your words, love sprang into desire."

I was forbidden to speak.

"And desire seemed to burst the cords that bound me. In that moment's strength I felt that I could give all for the joy of being once utterly yours."

I longed to clasp her to my heart. But her eyes were stern, and a frown crossed her brow.

"At morning light," she said, "desire died, but in my ecstasy I had sworn to give what must be given for that short bliss, and to lie in your arms and pant against you before another midnight. So I have come to bid you fare with me to the place where the spell may be loosed, and happiness bought."

She called the mare: it came whinnying, and pawed the ground until she had stroked its neck. She mounted, setting in my hand a tiny, satin-shod foot that seemed rather child's than woman's. "Let us go together to my house," she said. "I have orders to give and duties to fulfil. I will not keep you there long, for we must start soon on our errand." I walked exultantly at her side, but, the grange in view, I entreated her to speak explicitly of our mys-

terious journey. She stooped and patted my head. "'Tis but a matter of buying and selling," she answered.

When she had arranged her household affairs, she came to the library and bade me follow her. Then, with the mirror still swinging against her knees, she led me through the garden and wilderness down to a misty wood. It being autumn, the trees were tinted gloriously in dusky bars of colouring. The rowan, with his amber leaves and scarlet berries, stood before the brown black-spotted sycamore; the silver beech flaunted his golden coins against my poverty; firs, green and fawn-hued, slumbered in hazy gossamer. No bird carolled, although the sun was hot. Marina noted the absence of sound, and without prelude of any kind began to sing from the ballad of the Witch Mother: about the nine enchanted knots, and the trouble-comb in the lady's knotted hair, and the master-kid that ran beneath her couch. Every drop of my blood froze in dread, for whilst she sang her face took on the majesty of one who traffics with infernal powers. As the shade of the trees fell over her, and we passed intermittently out of the light, I saw that her eyes glittered like rings of sapphires. Believing now that the ordeal she must undergo would be too frightful, I begged her to return. Supplicating on my knees—"Let me face the evil alone!" I said, "I will entreat the loosening of the bonds. I will compel and accept any penalty." She grew calm. "Nay," she said, very gently, "if aught can conquer, it is my love alone. In the fervour of my last wish I can dare everything."

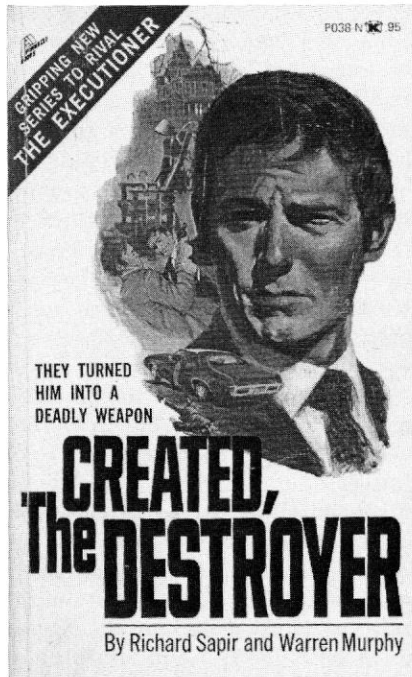
By now, at the end of a sloping alley, we had reached the shores of a vast marsh. Some unknown quality in the sparkling water had stained its whole bed a bright yellow. Green leaves, of such a sour brightness as almost poisoned to behold, floated on the surface of the rush-girdled pools. Weeds like tempting veils of mossy velvet grew beneath in vivid contrast with the soil. Alders and willows hung over the margin. From where we stood a half-submerged path of rough stones, threaded by deep swift channels, crossed to the very centre. Marina put her foot upon the first step. "I must go first," she said. "Only once before have I gone this way, yet I know its pitfalls better than any living creature."

Before I could hinder her she was leaping from stone to stone like a hunted animal. I followed hastily, seeking, but vainly, to lessen the space between us. She was gasping for breath, and her heart-beats sounded like the ticking of a clock. When we reached a great pool, itself almost a lake, that was covered with lavender scum, the path turned abruptly to the right, where stood an isolated grove of wasted elms. As Marina beheld this, her pace slackened, and she paused in momentary indecision; but, at my first word of pleading that she should go no further, she went on, dragging her silken mud-bespattered skirts. We climbed the slippery shores of the island (for island it was, being raised much above the level of the marsh), and Marina led the way over lush grass to an open glade. A great marble tank lay there, supported on two thick pillars. Decayed boughs rested on the crust of stagnancy within, and frogs, bloated and almost blue, rolled off at our approach. To the left stood the columns of a temple, a round, domed building, with a closed door of bronze. Wild vines had grown athwart the portal; rank, clinging herbs had sprung from the over-teeming soil; astrological figures were chiselled on the broad stairs.

Here Marina stopped. "I shall blindfold you," she said, taking off her loose sash, "and you must vow obedience to all I tell you. The least error will betray us." I promised, and submitted to the bandage. With a pressure of the hand, and bidding me neither move nor speak, she left me and went to the door of the temple. Thrice her hand struck the dull metal. At the last stroke a hissing shriek came from within, and the massive hinges creaked loudly. A breath like an icy tongue leaped out and touched me, and in the terror my hand sprang to the kerchief. Marina's voice, filled with agony, gave me instant pause. "*Oh, why am I thus torn between the man and the fiend? The mesh that holds life in will be ripped from end to end! Is there no mercy?*"

My hand fell impotent. Every muscle shrank. I felt myself turn to stone. After a while came a sweet scent of smouldering wood: such an Oriental fragrance as is offered to Indian gods. Then the door swung to, and I heard Marina's voice, dim and wordless, but

Continued on page 17




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# THE ADVENTURES OF THE DESTROYER

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## WEAPON OF JUSTICE

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By Michael Szymanski

AMERICA WAS in trouble. Crime and corruption had infected the country, and the disease was spreading far too swiftly for the established forces of law and order to control; the Constitution had become a mockery, a tool used to protect the criminal world and tie the hands of those who sought to bring the guilty to justice. Frustrated and angered, a President who was later to be murdered by an assassin created a highly secret agency known as C.U.R.E., an agency which was to operate outside the Constitution in order to ensure its protection. It was decided that the enforcement arm of this agency would consist of a single, extraordinary man; a man who did not exist, working for an organization which did not exist. His name was Remo, but he is better known to his millions of fans as the Destroyer.

### C.U.R.E., FOLCROFT, AND SMITTY

The original function of C.U.R.E. was to monitor and, when possible, eradicate legally untouchable criminal activities in the United States. Though that function has broadened to include the entire world, the basic operation remains unchanged.

C.U.R.E. employs a vast army of unsuspecting informants, people from all walks of life who supplement their income by dialing a number once a week to report any bit of information which seems out of the ordinary. Everyone from barflies to bank tellers, never knowing the truth, provide a flood of mostly useless data which is sifted through by a high sophisticated computer programmed to identify disturbing trends and patterns.

That computer was first located only in an off-limits section of Folcroft Sanitarium in Rye, New York, which,

though it is a perfectly functional nursing home, is also the headquarters of C.U.R.E. As time went by, a back-up computer was installed on the Caribbean island of St. Maarten, a quiet tourist paradise blessed with a laid-back, uncurious police force.

Only one man has access to the data unearthed by these supercomputers; Dr. Harold W. Smith, director of Folcroft Sanitarium and head of C.U.R.E. Smitty is a dour, lemon-faced man who owns a seemingly endless supply of grey Brooks Brothers suits—and even when he wears something else, such as the rare pair of Bermuda shorts, he still looks like he's on his way to a business meeting.

Smitty is a very serious, extremely dedicated man, having served with honors in the British Secret Service during World War II, and later with the CIA; it was his unswerving loyalty and professionalism which made him the

clear choice for the directorship of C.U.R.E. He is the only member of this three-man organization who speaks directly to the President, on a special red phone only the two of them know about. As each new President assumes office, Smitty informs him of C.U.R.E.'s existence. Some have been appalled, some have taken it in stride, but though every President has had the option to disband the agency, not a single one of them has ever exercised that option, and C.U.R.E. continues with its work. But not even the President can direct C.U.R.E.'s killer arm; that responsibility is Smitty's alone.

### REMO, CHIUN, AND BICKERING

Becoming a member of the C.U.R.E. team was a simple matter for Remo Williams; all he had to do was die.

Remo had been a cop, and a good one. He believed in what he was doing, and in the greatness of America, which was why he was framed for murder and sentenced to death. On the day of his execution Remo was visited by a 'priest' who left behind a pill which was to be taken just before the final walk; having nothing left to lose, Remo took the pill, then took the walk, and to the world at large he died in the electric chair.

When Remo came around he was at Folcroft, where his new life was outlined for him. Accepting, but only half believing the strange offer, he was then introduced to an even stranger man, whom he was told to kill.

He was a thin, frail-looking Korean in flowing robes who was somewhere between ninety and immortal, someone who would seemingly have trouble standing up to a feather, much less a gun; the only thing was, Remo could not kill him. He fired six shots at the Korean, but the old man simply wasn't there when the bullets arrived. In this way was Remo introduced to Chiun, present Master of Sinanju and, for a few decades at least, Remo's teacher.

This mismatched pair spend their spare time bickering with each other. Chiun's main bone of contention is that he has been forced to make a respectable assassin out of a "pale piece of pig's ear"—meaning Remo, of course, a dolt who can't even breathe right or even hold his elbow straight while fighting off a dozen armed punks. This usually leads to Chiun's bemoaning the disrespect given a poor,

frail old man in the twilight of his life, who must suffer the abuse of an ungrateful student so that the children of Sinanju will never starve. This from a "frail old man" who can shred steel plate with his bare hands, and who gets a monthly shipment of gold for his village in return for his services.

Remo, for his part, must contend with horrendously bad Ung poetry, Chiun's love of a long-defunct soap opera—and of course Chiun's carping about his unworthiness. Despite all this, these two very different men have over the years formed an unbreakable bond, and though both would deny it, they have become less teacher and student and more father and son. In fact Remo calls his mentor Little Father—though they are usually alone when he does.

### SINANJU, THE MASTERS AND SHIVA

Many, many generations past, the tiny fishing village of Sinanju on the Korean coast was held in the grip of a terrible famine, so terrible that all newborn children were thrown into the sea as a merciful alternative to starvation. So desperate did the villagers become that many took on the life of killers for hire, and the greatest of these were known as the Masters of Sinanju.

Over the years Sinanju became not only a place, but the Sun Source from which all other martial arts were born. The Masters of Sinanju could do amazing things; climb sheer walls, lift tremendous weights, survive for hours underwater, and, most importantly, slay a target no matter how well he was protected.

The Masters were very much in tune with their bodies, and quickly understood that proper breathing was the key to the secrets of Sinanju. As time progressed they were able to control the functions of their bodies, keeping themselves warm in sub-zero temperatures, resisting the searing heat of flames, and heightening their senses to an incredible degree.

Chiun is of course the latest Master of Sinanju, which was why he was hired by C.U.R.E. to train Remo. Some years before, Chiun had another student; his nephew Nuihc, who was to have been Master after Chiun. But Nuihc proved himself unworthy; he planned to betray Sinanju and his uncle, using his powers for evil and to

the benefit of only himself. Naturally Chiun disowned his nephew, and at the same time he was approached by C.U.R.E. he was still seeking an acceptable replacement; he found one

in Remo Williams.

Time is the greatest revealer, and so it proved to be in this case. Remo was the first white man ever to receive training in Sinanju and, despite his

## THE DESTROYER CASE FILE

Book Title First Printing

1	Created, The Destroyer	Jun '71	
2	Death Check	Jan '72	
3	Chinese Puzzle	Mar '72	
4	Mafia Fix	May '72	
5	Dr. Quake	Sep '72	
6	Death Therapy	Oct '72	
7	Union Bust	Jan '73	
8	Summit Chase	Feb '73	
9	Murder's Shield	Apr '73	
10	Terror Squad	Jun '73	
11	Kill Or Cure	Aug '73	
12	Slave Safari	Sept '73	
13	Acid Rock	Dec '73	
14	Judgment Day	Feb '74	
15	Murder Ward	Apr '74	
16	Oil Slick	Aug '74	
17	Last War Dance	Oct '74	
18	Funny Money	Feb '75	
19	Holy Terror	Jun '75	
20	Assassins Play-Off	Sep '75	
21	Deadly Seeds	Nov '75	
22	Brain Drain	Jan '76	
23	Child's Play	Apr '76	
24	King's Curse	Jul '76	
25	Sweet Dreams	Oct '76	
26	In Enemy Hands	Jan '77	
27	The Last Temple	Mar '77	
28	Ship Of Death	May '77	
29	The Final Death	Jul '77	
30	Mugger Blood	Sep '77	
31	The Head Men	Nov '77	
32	Killer Chromosomes	Mar '78	
33	Voodoo Die	Jun '78	
34	Chained Reaction (R)	Sep '78	
35	Last Call (R)	Dec '78	
36	Power Play	Mar '79	
37	Bottom Line (R)	Jul '79	
38	Bay City Blast (R)*	Oct '79	
39	Missing Link*	Feb '80	
40	Dangerous Games*	May '80	
41	Firing Line (R)*	Aug '80	
42	Timber Line*	Nov '80	
43	Midnight Man*	Feb '81	
44	Balance Of Power*	Jun '81	
45	Spoils Of War*	Aug '81	
46	Next Of Kin*	Nov '81	
47	Dying Space*	Feb '82	
48	Profit Motive (S)	May '82	
49	Skin Deep*	Jul '82	
50	Killing Time*	Oct '82	
51	Shock Value*	Feb '83	
52	Fool's Gold (S)	May '83	
53	Time Trial*	Aug '83	
54	Last Drop*	Nov '83	
55	Master's Challenge (S)	Feb '84	
56	Encounter Group*	Jun '84	
57	Date With Death*	Oct '84	
58	Total Recall*	Dec '84	
59	The Arms Of Kali (S)†	Nov '84	
60	End of the Game	Feb '85	
61	Lords of the Earth (S)		



#### Notes:

(S): A Super Novel written by Warren Murphy and Richard Sapir

(R): Novel in which Ruby Gonzalez appears

\*: Written solo by Warren Murphy

†: This publication date was taken from the book itself, and even though it has Book 59 being published before Book 58, the date is nevertheless official

All other books are written by Richard Sapir and Warren Murphy

smart-mouthing and sarcastic attitude he showed himself to be an excellent student—and perhaps even something more.

Among the countless tales of Sinanju there is a prophecy which holds that the deity Shiva, also called the Destroyer, will appear amongst men as a white-skinned Master of Sinanju, and Chiun is now convinced that Remo was meant to fulfill that prophecy; his only problem now is to convince Remo of that fact.

#### PLOTS, PLANS AND DIRTY DEEDS

There is a basic formula to the Destroyer novels, one which sets up the story quickly without becoming repetitious. Something nasty is going on and the Folcroft computer gets wind of it. In one case, it seems that someone is programming normal people to commit murder (Book 51: *Shock Value*). In another case the villain is using a new oil-eating bacterium in an attempt to wipe out the world's fuel supply (Book 48: *Profit Motive*). Warned of such strange events, Smitty advises Remo to investigate, and the rest is history—and so are the bad guys.

The story advances with a weaving of humor, philosophy and, yes, sex and violence. Even while they're trouncing a squad of hired goons Remo and Chiun continue to carp and bicker. In most of the stories there is some threat or occurrence which serves to advance Remo's understanding of Sinanju—and Chiun always seems to have a story about one of the past Masters which is tailor-made for the occasion.

As to the sex and violence, well, Remo is an assassin, which is by nature a violent profession. There is a great deal of killing on both sides, which serves to emphasize the utterly ruthless nature of the villains, and provides a certain grim satisfaction when those villains get what's coming to them. These books are a great release valve for some of the frustrations of our everyday lives; we'd all like to see a brutal mugger wind up in the hospital with his own gun rammed into his intestines the hard way. It's much the same feeling which has made shows like the *A Team* so popular.

Sinanju is a demanding art which sometimes calls for self-denial. Remo's diet consists of boiled duck and rice, with an occasional fish thrown in for variety. His system has been so puri-

fied and is so highly sensitive that the MSG in a regular hamburger will put him in a coma for days. Along these same lines, the incredible changes wrought upon him have made sex a rather meaningless exercise for Remo, a situation which depresses and angers him at the same time, for he realizes that he is changing into something that is more than human, but that he is paying for it by becoming something that is less than human. Don't worry, it doesn't always make sense to Remo, either.

Such problems as these are explored in the course of the 61 Destroyer adventures presently in print. What seems to bother Remo most is that he is allowed no real existence of his own; he has no identity, no permanent home, and can never hope to have anything like a normal family life. All that he sacrificed when he chose to defend his country in this most exceptional manner.

On many occasions Remo has threatened to just up and quit C.U.R.E. and attempt to live like a normal human being again, but each time he realizes that he can never leave Chiun or Sinanju, and that what he's doing really does make a difference in this corrupt world. This is fortunate, for it was understood that if C.U.R.E. was ever disbanded, Chiun was to kill Remo and return to Sinanju, while Smitty would destroy both computers and swallow a cyanide capsule, thereby wiping out all traces of the agency which did not exist. However, in the more recent books, it has become clear that Chiun would never slay his student, for is not Remo also Shiva, the Destroyer? Smitty though, it must be said, would still kill himself—it's just the kind of guy he is. . . .

#### NUIHC, THE DUTCHMAN AND MR. GORDONS

Few villains have what it takes to walk—or crawl—away from a meeting with Remo and Chiun. Those that have managed a return engagement are probably the most interesting and bizarre characters of the entire series.

Nuihc, Chiun's disowned nephew, did not take kindly to his rejection, and it was salt in the wound when he learned he was being replaced by a white man. So he set out to destroy Remo and leave Chiun without an heir, thus forcing him to accept Nuihc. He and Remo are very evenly matched

because of their shared training, and there are times when it seems evil will triumph—but Nuihc never took into account the prophecy of Shiva.

The Dutchman is the only name he goes by now, a cold-blooded killer with strange psychic and mental abilities which are a match for the power of Sinanju itself. The Dutchman was a disciple of Nuihc, who took the young boy, twisted his mind and perverted his powers to evil purposes. When he became an adult, this man who could kill with his mind began his hunt for Remo and Chiun.

Remo and the Dutchman represent, as it turns out, the ying and yang of Sinanju, the good and the evil sides of nature. Unfortunately, one cannot exist without the other, and to kill the Dutchman, Remo would have to die as well, for, like the forces they represent, they are forever linked.

But the most bizarre, the most deadly of Remo's foes was not even human. It was called Mr. Gordons and it was an android—a very special android. Mr. Gordons is an assimilator; as long as one small piece of him remains, he can rebuild his entire body from materials at hand, and he can reform himself into any shape which suits his purpose. All well and good, but his creator then pushed things by programming him for survival, and Mr. Gordons is a very literal creature. Identifying Remo and Chiun as the only two human beings who could destroy him, he instantly perceived them as a threat to his survival and set out to obliterate the pair.

Now with Mr. Gordons Remo has a real challenge, for an android doesn't react like a human being, and so he cannot be read like one. Even the most experienced gunman will transmit his intention to pull the trigger, whether by a twitch of the eye or the tensing of the trigger finger. Mr. Gordons sends out none of these signals, and his actions are therefore totally unpredictable.

This coupled with his ability to make himself over into any machine or instrument desired, makes this recurring villain the most deadly challenge Remo and Chiun have ever faced—and no one ever knows when Mr. Gordons will turn up again.

#### RUBY, BARRY SCHWEID AND THE PRESIDENT

Ruby Gonzalez is a beautiful and



*Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins.* Pictured: Fred Ward (as Remo), Joel Grey (as Chiun), and Kate Mulgrew. Copyright © 1985 Orion Pictures Corporation

capable black woman who took her degree at the University of CIA. This gutsy agent made her first appearance in Book 34: *Chained Reaction* and remained on an off-and-on basis for four more adventures, after which the authors moved on to new situations for Remo and Chiun.

Ruby was an excellent agent who could take care of herself quite well, thank you. Chiun took an almost instant liking to her, and since they both agreed that Remo was an idiot, they became fast friends. Chiun saw in Ruby the perfect mate for Remo, and was already planning to train their child in the arts of Sinanju.

About the only thing Ruby and Remo could ever agree on was that the union would never take place. Remo's off-handed, couldn't-care-less attitude was a constant irritant to Ruby, and when she got angry, her voice would rise through several octaves to an ear-piercing screech that made even Chiun wince. No way was Remo going to let himself in for a life of nagging in stereo!

Barry Schweid was the complete opposite of Ruby. The young man was a computer genius who couldn't tie his own shoes and had a raving fit if deprived of his security blanket. Though he only made one appearance, in Book 61: *Lords of the Earth*, he is worthy of mention for a number of good reasons.

First, Barry redesigned the C.U.R.E.

computers so that the entire operation could be run out of a briefcase-sized unit which contains an infinite source of memory, obtained by employing the cosmic relationships of the stars. By tapping this celestial source, Barry unwittingly stumbled upon the cosmic source of the power of Sinanju. By concentrating on a complex series of mind-boggling equations, Barry was able to channel some of that power into himself, with some very interesting results.

On a more personal level, Barry came to look upon Smitty as a father figure, and though he tried to deny it, Smitty, who was childless, found himself responding. It was an interesting situation, and it showed Smitty to be more human than any previous story had ever depicted him.

Believe it or not, the President of the United States is the most recurring secondary character in the series, appearing in just about every one of the novels. Though he is never specifically named, his speech and mannerisms are so accurately—and humorously—portrayed that there's no mistaking who's in the White House.

Usually the President, whoever he may be at the time, participates only to the extent of a phone call, but on rare occasions Smitty will meet with him personally. In Book 31: *The Head Men*, he was an active character, being

the target of an assassination plot. This was the first—and last—time that a President has ever met Remo and Chiun face to face.

#### CHANGES, THE FUTURE AND A MOVIE

With Book 59: *The Arms Of Kali*, the Destroyer left Pinnacle Books for his new home with Signet. This is typical, for the series itself is constantly changing so that it will never grow stale. With each new story Remo progresses in his understanding of Sinanju, and one can't help but cheer him on.

The future of the series seems assured, if only because it is so different from any of the others sharing the same category. Here we have two men who never use guns or explosives performing incredible physical feats, whose exploits have a depth and meaning sorely lacking in most active-adventure series.

Last year gave us the movie version of the series. Titled *Remo Williams*, it starred Fred Ward, who played in *Silkwood* and *The Right Stuff*, as the wise-cracking Remo, and Joel Grey as Chiun. Both actors fit their parts well, and the movie proved as much fun as the books.

Perhaps we can look forward to a series of movies about Remo and Chiun. As Remo is so fond of saying, "That's the biz, sweetheart." □

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# Contemporary Ideas about Lovecraft & the *Necronomicon*

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By Richard Kaczynski

THE ABOVE offer by Walker Baylor in the 1962 *Antiquarian Bookman* is but one of the many want-ads and classifieds advertising *The Necronomicon*. Supposedly an invention of H.P. Lovecraft, *The Necronomicon* has appeared on booksellers' lists (some more authentic than the above) since the 1930s, and this—coupled with the paperback publication of not one but three different books claiming to be the dread *Al Azif* of Lovecraft's fiction—has given pause to many people. Is *The Necronomicon* real? And, if so, does this mean that Lovecraft knew more about the occult than he was letting on?

Neither of these questions is likely to be answered to everybody satisfaction. This article, however, will review some recent arguments and ideas regarding Lovecraft's occult knowledge, especially regarding *The Necronomicon*.

## LOVECRAFT AND THE OCCULT

Lovecraft was a skilled narrator whose stories painted worlds of unimaginable horror. His characters stumbled in and out of black cults worshipping even blacker gods, and encountered sorcerers casting unspeakable spells. Given this preoccupation with cult and the occult, one might suspect Lovecraft had more than a passing familiarity with the supernatural. Several authors have argued this point, their final verdicts usually coming down to "guilty by association." Despite its circumstantiality, the evidence is compelling.

Most obviously, Lovecraft's own works should be consulted. As any good writer can attest, you write about things you know. I would be stupid to have a brain surgeon as a character in a novel as I know nothing about brain surgery, and Lovecraft would have been a fool to write about something he did not know. *The Call of Cthulhu* shows his fascination for geography, just as *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is the product of a man

enamoured of antiquities and linguistic archaisms. Since he does a good job writing about the occult, we can safely conclude Lovecraft knew something about the subject.

The real question, then, is how much did Lovecraft know about the occult? If we can believe Robert Block's tongue-in-cheek description of Lovecraft in *The Shambler from the Stars* as a man whose "Long years of occult experience had sharpened his intuition to an uncanny degree" and in *The Shadow from the Steeple* (with some friends) as "professional writers and students of the supernatural or the supranormal," then we can assume this knowledge was substantial. Since the remainder of Block's characterization is accurate, we can also assume a degree of accuracy here.

In fact, some of H.P. Lovecraft's friends were students of the supernatural or supranormal. Arthur Machen, whom Lovecraft admired for his horror story *The Great God Pan*, was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret society which flourished at the turn of the century in London. His correspondent Algernon Blackwood was also a member. This organization taught ritual magic (including the system of John Dee, about which more will be said later) and claimed to possess an ancient Arabic manuscript *The Veils*

## FOR SALE

Alhazred, Abdul. *The Necronomicon*. Spain, 1647. Calf covers rubbed and some foxing, otherwise very nice condition. Many small woodcuts of mystic signs and symbols. Seems to be a treatise (in Latin) on Ritualistic Magic. Ex. lib. Stamp on front fly leaf states that the book has been withdrawn from the Miskatonic University library. Best offer.

*of Negative Existence*. It is not altogether unlikely that Machen or Blackwood—in their correspondence with Lovecraft—divulged sundry tidbits of magic. For that matter, Lovecraft, who lived at a time when the proliferation of secret societies was at its peak, may have encountered one of these organizations himself.

Evidence suggests that Lovecraft's exposure to secret societies may have begun with his father. Colin Wilson, in his introduction to the Corgi Books edition of *The Necronomicon*, asserts that Winfield Lovecraft (Howard Phillips's father) was a Freemason; in fact, he was an Egyptian Freemason, a tradition steeped in hermetics and magic. Furthermore, he possessed two extremely obscure texts on magic, upon which HPL may have based his *Necronomicon*. He may have even possessed *The Necronomicon* itself. Wilson argues that, during the time Lovecraft's father was invalid, he may have inadvertently exposed Howard Phillips to the mysteries.

Kenneth Grant, the head of an international occult society called the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO, formerly run by the magician Aleister Crowley), unequivocally states Lovecraft knew in detail the Mysteries. In his books, he draws parallels between the Cthulhu Mythos and the OTO's teachings. He insists Lovecraft had "direct and conscious experience of the inner planes" and had "established contact with non-spatial entities." Grant even demonstrates Lovecraft had definitely heard of Aleister Crowley. However, any significant knowledge possessed by Lovecraft was not a conscious acquisition from any books, but unconscious information gleaned from the world of dreams and an unwritten

tome in mankind's collective unconscious.

Retrospectively, we see Lovecraft had ample opportunity for exposure to the occult: His friends, father, and favorite authors were learned in these matters. Furthermore, he lived at a time when secret societies were immensely popular. It is clear from his writing that Lovecraft was familiar with such secrets, but whether this knowledge came from active involvement or unconscious revelations is unknown. In all probability, both are partly responsible for his knowledge.

### THE NECRONOMICON

By now, everyone knows the supposed publication history of this book: Written in 730 A.D. by Abdul Alhazred and entitled *Al Azif*, it was translated into Greek in 950 A.D. with the title *Necronomicon*, followed by a Latin translation of the Greek in 1228 A.D. by Olaus Wormius and several subsequent editions in English, Latin, and Spanish. In this time, the volumes were subject to ecclesiastic suppression and burning. At first glance, this seems to be a fairly complex history for a hoax; however, it was probably not difficult for a historian and bibliophile of Lovecraft's ilk to invent such a history. But, despite Lovecraft's and Derleth's contentions that *The Necronomicon* is fictitious, booksellers have continued searching for copies, and three different versions have recently been printed.

The first of these was a facsimile edition of the original Arabic, discovered by Lin Carter while researching ancient cities for a book he was writing. In Baghdad, he purchased the manuscript from a government official and brought it to America, where linguists said it was gibberish. In 1973, a facsimile edition entitled *Al Azif* was published by Owlswick Press in hope that someone would decipher the work. It turns out the book's language is not Arabic, but Duraic. At present, however, there has been no successful translation of the text. Three Arab scholars reputedly died inexplicably while trying to translate this manuscript.

In 1977, Schlangekraft put out an English version of *The Necronomicon*. Fr. Montague Summers, an unorthodox priest who wrote many books on demonology and witchcraft, presented a copy of the Greek *Necronomicon* to

the editor to translate and publish on the condition that the original manuscript not be given up for public inspection (!). The editor remarks that his possession of the text caused him "fearful hallucinations, physical incapacities, and emotional malaise." The book is a mixture of familiar Cthulhu mythos entities and Sumerian deities, along with an editorial warning that experienced magicians found "there are no effective banishings for the forces invoked in the *Necronomicon* itself." The whole nature of the book—it was sold through comic magazines with a free crystal ball, the original manuscript is unavailable for public inspection, and the editor remains anonymous—casts serious doubt on the book's authenticity. Experimentation, however, has proven the text to contain potent magic.

In 1978, another book entitled *The Necronomicon* was published, this time by Neville Spearman. It began with an examination of Dr. John Dee's unpublished manuscripts in the British Museum library. At this point, it will be useful to digress and describe Dee's contribution to magic.

Dee was court astrologer for Queen Elizabeth and he, with Edward Kelley as his clairvoyant, contacted a spirit who communicated to them the rudiments of the angelic language Enochian. This was done by constructing, according to the spirit's instructions, large tabular grids, within the squares of which were placed letters of the Enochian alphabet. While gazing into a crystal, Kelley would identify a tablet and call off a row and column number matching that pointed to by the spirit in the vision; these Dee would use to locate a letter on the actual tablets and write it down. By this methodical process were thirty Aethyrs and eighteen Calls (powerful evocations of entities outside this world) given in reverse (because even writing these spells called up unsavory creatures). This language has its own grammar and syntax, and is doubtlessly authentic. Dee was a scholar of unquestionable principles who never published his manuscripts or attempted to capitalize upon them, and Kelley, although a rogue, couldn't possibly have concocted a new language, memorized 48 evocations in reverse, and memorized the position of all the thousands of letters on every tablet. Enochian was never intended to be a hoax.

Among Dee's manuscripts was a peculiar piece entitled *Liber Logaeth*, a collection of 101 grids containing letters and numbers written in Kelley's hand as dictated by the spirit in 1583. David Langford, a cipher expert, wrote a computer program to analyze these tablets on the assumption they contained an elaborate code. The program is sophisticated, and guesses the true value of letters according to letter frequency in English, resemblance to real words, and a series of other iterative processes. The result shocked the cryptologist: These tablets, when deciphered, contained *The Necronomicon*!

This is where questions arise: Given three different editions claiming to be *The Necronomicon*, which one is authentic? Are any of them authentic? For that matter, does there exist an authentic copy? I will assume the answer to this last question to be a "yes," and examine the various possibilities this suggests.

First of all, one of the published editions may be authentic. If not, this does not rule out the book's existence. Friends who own occult bookshops have assured me they've seen—albeit very rarely—old copies of *The Necronomicon* come into the store. It is not unlikely that such a book could remain generally unknown all these years; now-classic 15th-century magical texts such as *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* and *The Key Of Solomon* were unknown until translations of the single known copies were published at the turn of this century. A good many books on magic are every bit as obscure as *The Necronomicon* is supposed to be.

Furthermore, even if there is no such book answering to the title *Necronomicon*, this may not rule out its existence per se. Lovecraft wrote fiction—changing the names to protect the innocent, so to speak—and it is generally known that Miskatonic University was based on Brown University, Arkham is really Salem, Kingsport is Marblehead, and Innsmouth is Little Neck. Would it then be unsurprising that *The Necronomicon* is the pseudonym for an equally ominous real-world grimoire? Colin Wilson believes this may be the case. In his introduction to the 1978 *Necronomicon*, he examines several other occult books with a similar history as Lovecraft's book, some of which were in the possession of his father, the Egyptian Freemason.

Another possibility is postulated by Kenneth Grant. In drawing parallels between Lovecraft's mythos and the ideas of other occultists, he insists that Lovecraft was perpetuating an occult tradition; this, however, is not a written or oral tradition, but one that can only be accessed through dreams. Grant believes *The Necronomicon* is a real book, but one that can only be read and studied through the use of unconventional senses (or magic).

That Lovecraft gained his inspiration from dreams is well known. In one letter, Lovecraft wrote, "Nyarlathotep is a nightmare—an actual phantasm of my own, with the first paragraph written before I fully awakened." In fact, Lovecraft even admits the name "Necronomicon" came to him in a dream. He prided himself on his vivid nightmares, and culled the monsters and plots of his stories from these nocturnal images.

To prove Lovecraft's inspiration was his dreams is simple; to show these dreams were real is another matter entirely. One must rely upon parallels between Lovecraft and his contemporaries, and the success of other magicians who use sleep to gaze into the pages of this unwritten tome (namely Austin Osman Spare, Aleister Crowley, and Soror Andahadna). Grant suggests Lovecraft's poems indicate he knew he was dealing with more than just phantasy when it came to the Cthulhu Mythos, and Lovecraft himself wrote

in one of his letters about another myth cycle, "All this sounds amusingly like the synthetic mythology I have concocted for my stories, but (E. Hoffman) Price assures me it is actual folklore. . . ." Anyone who wants to know about the details of these parallels and the theory in general is advised to consult Grant's books, particularly *Outside the Circles of Time*.

The dramatic upshot of all this—if *The Necronomicon* is real—is that this means the entities and monsters are real. I don't necessarily mean to imply Cthulhu is literally asleep at the bottom of the ocean. At the very least, this means people have worshiped these monsters in one form or another. At the very most, the creatures may be magical powers of infinite age.

The *Cthulhu Companion* put out by Chaosium has an article on the etymology of some of Lovecraft's mythos names. (For instance, note that the name Yog-Sothoth closely resembles that of the dual Egyptian god Sut-Thoth.) Another article in the same book draws parallels between the Cthulhu Mythos and Mesoamerican religion. The editor of the 1977 *Necronomicon* outlines similarities with Sumerian religion, just as Grant compares it to the system of others. In fact, Dagon is a name appearing in actual mythology. That the creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos were once worshiped (in one form or another) is fairly clear.

In addition, these entities are still worshiped by various occult groups. *The Satanic Rituals* by LaVey, although consisting largely of pirated drivel, has the Ceremony of the Nine Angles supposedly written in the same language as *The Necronomicon*. Bertiaux, a Chicago adept, claims he has contacted the Deep Ones, and magicians in Ohio are currently evoking the Great Old Ones. So, regardless of the reality of the mythos, people are conjuring these powers and claiming results.

## CONCLUSION

The mysteries of Lovecraft's past are still unknown. The reality of *The Necronomicon* is still unestablished. Either or both are possibilities, and the enterprising Keeper will find a way to work these tidbits into a contemporary campaign. However, the truly curious should bear in mind the following: Only recently has Lovecraft's involvement with various radical social groups come to light (see *Lovecraft's Book* by Richard A. Lupoff), and a secret like studying (or even practicing) the occult may be buried even deeper. And, when renowned authorities on magic insist *The Necronomicon* is real, such claims deserve attention. It is a mystery which the reader—and the *Call Of Cthulhu* player-characters—will have to solve for themselves. □

## BOOKS

Continued from page 7

the books are for ages 10 and up. For adults and older teens I would suggest reading the Data Bank but not the Data File hints in the back of the book. Those clues can make things a bit too easy to figure out. I would suggest to history buffs they test themselves by not reading either of the Data sections.

All in all these book adventures do exactly what they set out to do. They entertain while teaching you a little bit of history (in a painless way) and they work your brain. I enjoy this series a great deal. The physical production and graphics are first rate. There is not a lot of replay, but it usually takes over an hour to finish a book. At \$1.95 per book that is not a bad gaming value. I am looking forward to upcoming releases. □

## THE SAMURAI CAMPAIGN



IMAGINE YOURSELF in the role of a daimyo, a feudal lord in Shogun Japan. *The Samurai Campaign* is a play-by-mail game in which you control the destiny of your clan in battle, politics, and fortune.

Information will initially be provided concerning your fief, family history, residence, annual stipend, daimyo rank, a map of the realm, a list of all the lords, and the names and addresses of their players. Future installments of the campaign will cover castles, report on the state of the realm, the use of ninja spies and assassins, etc.

Turns will allow you to make your intentions known to the Campaign Master (aggressive acts may take several turns to culminate), ask for information (you may

or may not get an answer, no guarantees as to accuracy), and make public announcements. Private messages to other lords may be transmitted directly to the player or through the Campaign Master. The identity of the player playing the role of the Shogun, however, is kept secret and all messages to him will have to be transmitted through the Campaign Master.

Estimated time between turns is two months—one month to collate and process the turns and another month to layout, print, and mail.

Entry fee is \$6. Send your name, address, and phone number (optional) plus a check or money order for the appropriate amount to: Different Worlds, 2814-19th Street, San Francisco CA 94110. Please declare whether you wish to play anonymously and have all communications transmitted through the Campaign Master.



## "THE BASILISK"

Continued from page 9

raised in wild deprecation. Hour after hour passed so, and still I waited. Not until the sash grew crimson with the rays of the sinking sun did the door open.

"Come to me!" Marina whispered. "Do not take off your blindfold. Quick—we must not stay here long. He is glutted with my sacrifice."

Newborn joy rang in her tones. I stumbled across and was caught in her arms. Shafts of delight pierced my heart at the first contact with her warm breasts. She turned me round, and bidding me look straight in front, with one swift touch untied the knot. The first thing my dazed eyes fell upon was the mirror of black glass which had hung from her waist. She held it so that I might gaze into its depths. And there, with a cry of amazement and fear, *I saw the shadow of the Basilisk.*

The Thing was lying prone on the floor, the presentiment of a sleeping horror. Vivid scarlet and sable feathers covered its gold-crowned cock's-head, and its leathern dragon-wings were folded. Its sinuous tail, capped with a snake's eyes and mouth, was curved in luxurious and delighted satiety. A prodigious evil leaped in its atmosphere. But even as I looked a mist crowded over the surface of the mirror: the shadow faded, leaving only an indistinct and wavering shape. Marina breathed upon it, and, as I peered and pored, the gloom went off the plate and left, where the Thing had lain, the prostrate figure of a man. He was young and stalwart, a dark outline with a white face, and short black curls that fell in tangles over a shapely forehead, and eyelids languorous and

red. His aspect was that of a wearied demon-god.

When Marina looked sideways and saw my wonderment, she laughed delighted in one rippling running tune that should have quickened the dead entrails of the marsh. "I have conquered!" she cried. "I have purchased the fulness of joy!" And with one outstretched arm she closed the door before I could turn to look; with the other she encircled my neck, and, bringing down my head, pressed my mouth to hers. The mirror fell from her hand, and with her foot she crushed its shards into the dank mould.

The sun had sunk behind the trees now, and glittered through the intricate leafage like a charcoal-burner's fire. All the nymphs of the pools arose and danced, grey and cold, exulting at the absence of the divine light. So thickly gathered the vapours that the path grew perilous. "Stay, love," I said. "Let me take you in my arms and carry you. It is no longer safe for you to walk alone." She made no reply, but, a flush arising to her pale cheeks, she stood and let me lift her to my bosom. She rested a hand on either shoulder, and gave no sign of fear as I bounded from stone to stone. The way lengthened deliciously, and by the time we reached the plantation the moon was rising over the further hills. Hope and fear fought in my heart: soon both were set at rest. When I set her on the dry ground she stood a-tiptoe, and murmured with exquisite shame: "To-night, then, dearest. My home is yours now."

So, in a rapture too subtle for words, we walked together, arm-enclosed, to her house. Preparations for a banquet were going on within: the windows

were ablaze, and figures passed behind them bowed with heavy dishes. At the threshold of the hall we were met by a triumphant crash of melody. In the musicians' gallery bald-pated veterans played with flute and harp and viol-de-gamba. In two long rows the antic retainers stood, and bowed, and cried merrily: "Joy and health to the bride and groom!" And they kissed Marina's hands and mine, and, with the players sending forth that half-forgotten tenderness which threads through ancient song-books, we passed to the feast, seating ourselves on the dais, whilst the servants filled the tables below. But we made little feint of appetite. As the last dish of confections was removed a weird pageant swept across the further end of the banqueting-room: Oberon and Titania with Robin Goodfellow and the rest, attired in silks and satins gorgeous in hue, and bedizened with such late flowers as were still with us. I leaned forward to commend, and saw that each face was brown and wizened and thin-haired: so that their motions and their wedding paeon felt goblin and discomfiting; nor could I smile till they departed by the further door. Then the tables were cleared away, and Marina, taking my finger-tips in hers, opened a stately dance. The servants followed, and in the second maze, a shrill and joyful laughter proclaimed that the bride had sought her chamber. . . .

Ere the dawn I wakened from a troubled sleep. My dream had been of despair: I had been persecuted by a host of devils, thieves of a priceless jewel. So I leaned over the pillow for Marina's consolation; my lips sought hers, my hand crept beneath her head. My heart gave one mad bound—then stopped. □

## HOLLYWOOD

Continued from page 4

imagery is excellent research material for the quality game-master. First on the list is *Excalibur*. Imagery runs riot in this film, always to a very sharp and pointed effect. We see the transition from the early days of Arthur to the heyday of Camelot in one striking piece of imagery—the "shining armor"—and likewise the fall in the same way (the shiny armor becomes pitted, rusted, filthy). Imagery gives us the

enchantment of the Lady in the Lake, the glory of Lancelot, the ominous magic of Merlin, and the lust of Uther and not a word need be said.

In more modern dress, check into *Blade Runner* for the sheer impact of a violent and decadent future society. Other films of the future worth watching for imagery are *Logan's Run* (a must for *Paranoia* players), *Alien*, *Outland*, and *The Empire Strikes Back* (far superior in imagery which contributes to the story than any of the other *Star Wars* films).

Lastly, a few "selected" pieces:

the "town of the madmen" sequence from *Gymtaka*, a terribly silly film but worth catching for this single piece of horrific imagery (*Call Of Cthulhu* and *Chill* players will both benefit), the "phantom bird" sequence from *Conan The Destroyer* (an excellent piece of magic imagery), and the killing of Professor Strangeways from *Dr. No* (you may have to rent it, the full impact of this image is often cut on TV, in one brief instant it delineates the character of James Bond).

The important thing to keep in mind about imagery is that each

picture you paint in the minds of the players should be worth the words you expend on it. Describing every visual detail of every simple move is unnecessary. You want your imagery to be dynamic, so keep it short and to the point. If players don't respond to your mental film scene, drop it, move on. Learn what hits them and you in terms of visual description and don't slow up the fun by overtelling the story.

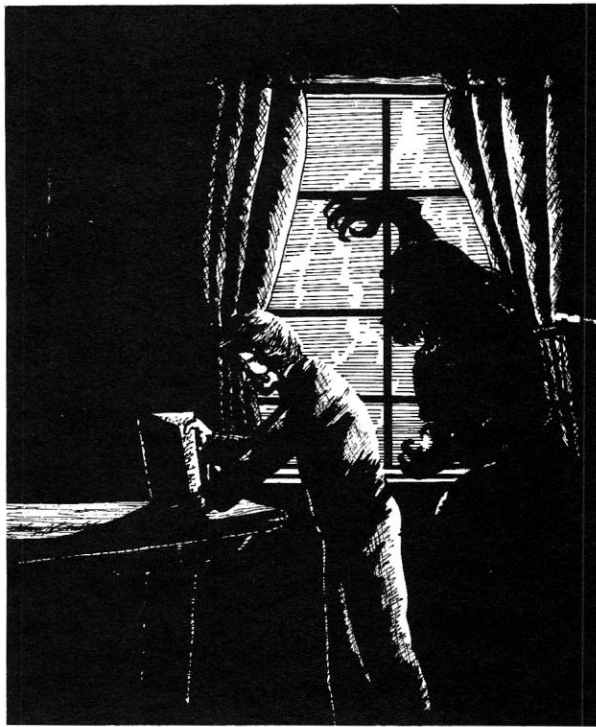
*Okay, end of sermon for this month. Go in pieces and keep those galloping dominoes galloping. See ya next time!* □

# Scary Monsters Super Creeps

## Variants for Call Of Cthulhu

By Marcus L. Rowland

Illustrated by  
Bruce A. Blackard



*CALL OF Cthulhu* is one of the most successful role-playing games currently available, and owes much of its strength to the fact that it draws its inspiration from a consistent source, the works of H.P. Lovecraft and a small circle of secondary writers. However, the fact that some players are familiar with Lovecraft's work often causes problems. In many cases a player running an investigator with no Mythos knowledge may know more about the game's background than the Keeper. Occasional players may also be unhappy with the 1920's setting.

Present-day and futuristic adventures within the Cthulhu Mythos have been covered by articles and scenarios in various magazines. However, the idea of using the *Call Of Cthulhu* rules for adventures outside the Mythos has received comparatively little attention. Look in any bookshop and you will see hundreds of horror novels and short-story collections, only a handful derived from the works of Lovecraft. In books, films, and comics, on the radio and on TV, there is a huge body of work crying out to be incorporated into a variant *Call Of Cthulhu* campaign.

This diversity of material poses its own dangers, of course. If the Keeper insists on running a campaign with no consistency, taking a monster from the Cthulhu Mythos for one adventure and introducing killer frogs for the next, it is likely that players will soon become bored. The Cthulhu Mythos is an essential anchor for a normal game, since it implies a logical (but horrific) universe. If a variant campaign is going to succeed it must introduce a consis-

tent replacement mythology, preferably as horrible as the Cthulhu Mythos itself.

The remainder of this article suggests three themes for such campaigns. Each section consists of an explanation of the central mythos of the campaign, suggestions for plots, settings, and rule changes, a brief scenario outline, examples of creatures, weapons, and organizations, and some sources for further adventures. Keepers are warned that these variants require more work than a normal *Call Of Cthulhu* campaign, and may not appeal to all players.

### THEME 1: THEY'RE COMING!

*Something from outer space plans to take over the Earth and destroy the human race. The aliens are infinitely subtle and horrid, and seem to be capable of any degree of cruelty. Almost perfect duplicates of human beings roam the Earth, sabotaging and murdering to further their evil ends. The investigators learn to recognize*

*the tiny betraying details of the alien disguises, but their efforts to inform the general public always end in failure. The aliens' sinister technology and vast scientific knowledge produces weapons with horrific powers. Denounced as Communists and lunatics, the adventurers must wage a lonely fight against the alien menace.*

This sort of campaign is best set in the paranoid atmosphere of McCarthy-era America, with magic replaced by alien technology, psionics, and the products of a few dedicated human scientists. Skills are much the same as those in a normal campaign, although it's necessary to add electronics and other modern sciences. Normal cult objects are omitted, replaced by alien tools and weapons. Alien books are occasionally found, but must be deciphered by dedicated linguists. Spools of microfilm in a strange film gauge might gradually decode into instructions for the construction of a Mark IV Death Ray, or might be a subtle trap to destroy the minds of enquiring scientists. As the investigators gain experience they will learn more about the scope and purpose of the alien plans. Meanwhile, the aliens will become more adept at disguise, until it is almost impossible to distinguish them from normal humans. The campaign could easily incorporate attacks by flying saucers, resurrection of the living dead, and alien monsters and robots. Many of the alien devices will

directly attack the victims' SAN or POW, if not their physical bodies. The true (and horrific) form and plans of the aliens are gradually revealed, as the heroes fight to liberate the Earth.

**Scenario:**

**New Lamps for Old**

Note: This should be run as the second or third episode of a campaign.

**Investigators' Information:** Dwight Collins, one of the few scientists to recognize the alien menace, has been found dead in a small Middle-American town, his body almost incinerated by some strange force. The local police are baffled, but the investigators recognize the hallmarks of an extraterrestrial attack. It seems likely that there is an alien enclave in the town.

**Keeper's Information:** The U.S. TV networks have just started to transmit to this area, and a group of aliens have replaced the staff of the local electronics shop. They are selling TV sets at bargain prices, offering a \$25 trade-in on all electrical goods if a TV is purchased. The townfolk have flocked to trade their old toasters and irons for TVs. The alien plan is simple; the picture tube of each set has been modified to release deadly will-sapping radiation. Each hour of watching drains 1-3 points of SAN (unless a SAN roll is made; the Keeper must roll at the end of each period of exposure, without telling the investigator what is happening). If the cumulative SAN loss is sufficient to cause insanity, the victim becomes vulnerable to subliminal hypnotic patterns flickering at the edges of the screen, and will obey any alien command.

Collins was staying overnight in the town motel, which has just installed TVs. The flickering patterns aroused his suspicions, and he decided to investigate the TV relay station (which is innocuous) and the electronics company. His questions alarmed the aliens, who killed him with a ray inducing spontaneous human combustion.

Four aliens run the electronics company, modifying the TV sets while "testing" them. Their equipment includes some alien tools, a transmitter, and the combustion ray (which will damage the alien's disguises but will not destroy the aliens themselves).

**The Aliens:** The aliens are blobs of a tough amorphous green jelly, and occupy cloned human bodies which

are almost exact replicas of normal human beings.

	<i>Human Shell</i>	<i>Alien</i>
STR	2D6+12	2D6
CON	2D6+6	2D6+6
APP	3D6	—
SIZ	2D6+6	1D6
INT	4D6	4D6
POW	4D6	4D6
DEX	2D6+4	1D6+3
EDU	4D6+2	4D6+2

Notes: Aliens have eight additional hit points to those of the human shells they inhabit. Only damage to the head or torso will harm the alien in its human shell, or damage exceeding the maximum for either body area. If the body is killed the alien may still survive, flowing clear and escaping when no one is looking. If an alien is killed it dissolves into a puddle of organic slime then spontaneously ignites; this is apparently due to chemical treatment or some strange reaction with the atmosphere.

DESCRIPTION: Clones may be distinguished by the following features:

- 1: Thumbs are double-jointed.
- 2: Pupils of eyes are abnormally large—most disguise this fact by wearing contact lenses or sunglasses.
- 3: Early models have no navels.

Only characteristic 3 is a definite indication of alien origin. The bodies are cloned from kidnaped victims, with special chemical and radiation treatment speeding cell growth but blocking the development of a brain and spinal nerves. When cloning is complete an alien flows into the skull cavity and spine. RNA is extracted from the victim's brain (which is destroyed in the process), and processed to give the alien its victim's memory. The process takes approximately 15 hours, from capture of a human subject to ingestion of memory RNA. Once the alien enters the body it takes another 3D6 hours for the alien to establish full control of its new body. The clones last 2D4 years before accelerated cell growth destroys them. The cloning equipment looks like a large chest-type deep freeze. It is generally kept in the aliens' spacecraft, but units may be issued to groups of aliens who anticipate replacing a large number of humans.

SAN: Seeing an alien in its natural form costs 1-3 points of SAN unless a

SAN roll succeeds. Viewing the entire cloning and memory extraction process would probably drain at least 2D6 points of SAN, depending on how much of the process was witnessed.

**CULTS, SPELLS:** The aliens are not associated with any cults or spells, but 10% have psionic powers—usually telepathy, telekinesis, or teleportation. All these powers oppose the alien's POW to the SIZ of the object affected (or to the victim's POW in the case of telepathy), and have a range limit of a mile for a cost of two magic points per usage.

**Spontaneous Combustion Ray:** This weapon makes a POW-based attack on the victim, utilizing magic points from the user. The points are directed against the victim's CON; if the points expended overcome the victim's CON the victim must make a luck roll or immediately burst into flames, dying almost instantly. If the luck roll is made the victim takes 2D6 points of damage (but no more damage than the magic points put into the attack). If CON is not overcome there is no effect. The weapon is approximately the same size as a pocket torch, with 6 breakage points. It is not aimed; the user directs the attack mentally. Maximum range is 130'. The ray projectors are booby-trapped, and explode if their castings are opened—damage 2D6, 2-yard radius.

**Further Sources**

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*  
 Film 1956, remade 1977  
*I Married a Monster from Outer Space*  
 Film, Gene Fowler 1959  
*The Invaders*  
 U.S. TV series, Quinn-Martin 1964  
*Plan 9 from Outer Space*  
 Film, Edward D. Wood 1959  
*Quatermass II* Film, Hammer 1955  
*This Island Earth* Film, Universal 1955  
*They Came from Somewhere Else*  
 British TV series 1984  
*Doctor Who* Various episodes  
*UFO* British TV series 1970  
*V* U.S. TV series 1983  
*The Midwich Cuckoos*  
 Novel, John Wyndham  
*The Ceres Solution* Novel, Bob Shaw  
*Fire Pattern* Novel, Bob Shaw  
*The Golden Turkey Awards*  
 Book, H. & M. Medved, 1980  
*Bug Eyed Monsters* Game, West End  
*They've Invaded Pleasantville!*  
 Game, TSR  
 British and U.S. science-fiction films

of the 1950's and early 1960's are a good source of scenario ideas on this theme.

## THEME 2: SOME OF YOUR BLOOD. . .

*Vampirism exists, and is an infectious disease of the soul and body spread by its evil carriers. Over thousands of years they have learned to blend in with the normal community, disguising their strange habits so well that most people refuse to believe in them. Some isolated areas are totally controlled by these creatures, others are slowly falling into their evil grip. The miasma of their influence is gradually spreading into larger communities and cities. The investigators have seen their power, and know that it is time to take sides in the battle between humanity and the vampires.*

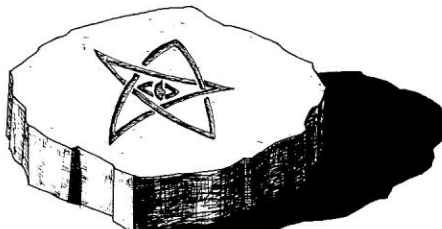
The scope of this theme means that a campaign can be set in almost any place or era. Legends and fiction place vampires in many historical periods; Europe in the 15th to 19th centuries, Britain and the U.S. in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The theme can easily be extended further into the past or the future. It requires less development work than other variant campaigns since the *Call Of Cthulhu* rules already incorporate information on the undead—in fact, a prolonged fight against the undead could be one of several themes in a normal campaign. Normal skills and magical abilities are used, though a “pure” vampire campaign might need to replace some of the books and artifacts with items more relevant to the undead—sacred scrolls, holy water, Bibles, and relics of saints. The Keeper will also need to develop the characteristics of vampires, to explain the mechanics of infection and transformation. Information on the *RuneQuest* Vivamort cult might easily be adapted to this setting. Optionally, there could be some variation in the characteristics of vampires in different regions, so that investigators could never be entirely sure that their weapons will be effective. The old joke “Oy vey, have you got the wrong vampire!” might easily become the last words heard by an unlucky investigator!

### Scenario: The Carrier

Note: This episode could be the fourth or fifth part of a campaign.

**Investigators' Information:** Alice Cook, a housemaid, went out to walk a dog and disappeared for three weeks. She has been found, alive but insane. Anaemia and bite marks on her neck indicate a vampiric attack, but she does not respond to any of the standard tests for infection. If she has not been infected, why did she disappear for so long?

**Keeper's Information:** Normally undead are created by infection. However, an occasional male vampire retains sexual potency and can impregnate living women. Alice is pregnant, carrying a foetal vampire which drains blood and normal nutrients from her body, and thus causes her anaemia. She is not infected, but the foetus will be born undead. Alice escaped from some of the vampire's mesmerised followers while they were transporting her from the vampire's tomb to their house. The followers now know her location, and will make a determined effort to kidnap her 1-3 days after the start of the scenario. If they fail the vampire will attack 2-5 nights later.



The investigators have one clue to Alice's fate; the dog escaped when she was kidnaped, and could lead them to the tomb. The followers offer another line of enquiry, but will not go to the tomb without Alice; if they are unable to capture her, the vampire will visit their house in bat form to determine the exact situation. A female investigator might be able to impersonate Alice, but this would be dangerous.

The foetus can be aborted by normal surgical methods, provided a doctor will agree to break the law or forge documents proving a medical need for an abortion. However, if any of its blood enters Alice's circulatory system she will become a vampire. If the foetus is aborted but the adult is not destroyed, it will make a determined effort to kill Alice, her doctor, and anyone else involved in the abortion, including investigators. The foetus will be born nine months after conception if not aborted. The young are born with some instinctive knowledge—

mainly the ability to shapechange, and an essentially evil nature. The young are born fanged. They attack the first human they see after birth (but not the mother), feed, then transform to bat shape and fly to the father.

### Vampire:

	Adult	Young
STR	4D6+12	1D6
CON	2D6+6	1D6
APP	3D6	1D6
SIZ	3D6	1D4
INT	3D6	2D6
POW	2D6+6	1D6
DEX	3D6	1D6
EDU	4D6+2	1D4+1

### Weapon Attack Damage Attack Damage

Touch	50%	2D4	15%	2D2
Bite	50%	1D4	20%	1D3

Notes: This vampire species is similar to the type described in the *Call Of Cthulhu* sourcebook, with a few important differences: adults have the hypnotic gaze ability described there, young do not. The young are immune to sunlight, but lose this protection 2D6 days after birth. Most important, both adults and young can spread the vampiric infection by biting. There is a 5% chance per point of bite damage that the disease is injected. If wounds are treated quickly, with hot irons or disinfectant, the disease will usually be stopped. If left untreated, or if there is enough bite damage to cause unconsciousness, the victim will become feverish for 1D6 days, then fall into a coma lasting another 1D4 days. At the end of this period the victim “dies,” emerging from the grave 4D6 days later. The disease can be cured in the fever stage by antibiotics, which were unavailable before 1936; optionally the disease becomes antibiotic-resistant after 1965.

SAN: Witnessing any vampire attack costs 1-6 points of SAN unless a SAN roll is made. Witnessing any vampiric transformation will cost 1-3 points of SAN unless a roll is made.

### Further Sources

- Dracula* Novel, Bram Stoker
- The Dracula Tapes* (et seq.)  
Novels, Fred Saberhagen
- Fever Dream*  
Novel, George R.R. Martin
- Dance of the Vampires*  
Film, Roman Polanski 1967
- Captain Kronos—Vampire Hunter*  
Film, Hammer 1970

*I Am Legend* Novel, Richard Matheson  
*Dark Shadows* U.S. TV series, 1970  
*Cults Of Terror* Game module  
(for *RuneQuest*), Chaosium  
*Undead* Game, Steve Jackson

Keepers should be wary of the Hammer sequels to *Dracula* which add little to the mythos and suggest rigid behavior patterns which might be inappropriate to a campaign.

### THEME 3: PERFECTLY NORMAL PARANOIA. . .

*Things are not what they seem. The apparent rulers of the Earth are little more than puppets, manipulated by a group of shadowy figures who prefer to avoid the light of publicity. They are utterly ruthless, using financial pressure, violence, and blackmail to maintain their grip on the uninitiated. A few investigators have stumbled across their sinister machinations, and are trying to find out the truth behind the lies in the newspapers and the history books. Meanwhile the secret masters of the world have realized that someone has begun to take an unhealthy interest in their activities.*

This variant works well in a modern setting, from the 1960's to the present day, and is best played as a fast-moving global campaign with, for example, one scenario set in an isolated corner of Tibet, the next in central London or New York. The enemy can use anyone or anything as a weapon—a trusted relative or colleague, CIA or KGB assassins, the Mafia or the Phone Company. In some cases the enemy's main aim may be the destruction of the investigators, in others investigators may intervene in some strategy of the secret elite. As the investigators progress, the forces raised against them become more devious and powerful. A whole hierarchy of evil and corruption is gradually revealed, uncovering some vast ancient plan.

It's possible to combine this theme with a normal Cthulhu Mythos background, assuming that minions of the Great Old Ones already secretly control the Earth. However, adding Mythos creatures to the other forces available to a secret elite might make it impossible for investigators to survive beyond the first scenario. The best compromise is probably to limit intervention by Mythos creatures, on the assumption that the investigators are

too insignificant to warrant their attention in the early stages of the campaign. Alternatively, a completely non-magical campaign might emphasize combat and technology, adding appropriate skills such as computer programming, microelectronics, and data gathering (bugging). The scenario example which follows is designed for such a campaign.

#### Scenario: Cut-Off

Note: This is designed as the first scenario of a campaign.

**Investigators' Information:** One of the investigators (preferably a private detective or a lawyer) is approached by Arnold Bastable, a man with an unusual problem. Two days ago Arnold woke to find that his house suddenly had no electricity, gas, water, or telephone services. He went to a public phone and called the appropriate companies, and was told that services had been withdrawn for non-payment of bills. He later discovered that his bank accounts held no cash and that all his credit cards had been canceled. Now Internal Revenue agents have seized his office, claiming he owes \$127,456 in unpaid taxes. Arnold has \$225 in cash and a diamond ring which he says is worth \$1500. He wants to know why all this has happened.

**Keeper's Information:** Six weeks ago Arnold was one of ten witnesses to the assassination of Senator Lewis Brandin, a prominent spokesman for freedom of information. The assassins were led by Paul Danvers, a mobile agent of the Secret Elite (see below), who has been ordered to eliminate all witnesses. Four have suffered unusual accidents (drowning in a bathtub, a hit-and-run skateboard collision, burial under a pile of toilet rolls from a collapsed stack, and blood poisoning from a stapler cut). Two didn't see enough to justify any action. One died from natural causes, before any action was taken. The remaining three, including Arnold, saw enough to justify some action but can't identify anyone, so Danvers decided to eliminate them by less drastic methods. One is under arrest for bigamy, another has suffered a "nervous breakdown" (caused by drugs). Arnold's name has been put on a list of foreign agents, who are subject to harassment by the FBI and CIA. The withdrawal of services Arnold has experienced is designed to make it im-

possible to live a normal inconspicuous life. Although Arnold doesn't know it, the records of all his insurance policies and pensions have quietly disappeared, as have the records of his mortgage repayments, property taxes, and social security payments. In short, Arnold is becoming an "unperson," obliterated from all records. He will soon lose his livelihood, his home, and any chance of employment. While the program is active there is no way he can re-establish his life.

The only way to help Arnold is to trace the instructions back to the agencies responsible for his problems, via the electricity company, bank, or tax bureau. This would involve penetrating security on two or three computer systems, all well-protected. If the CIA and FBI can be given proof that Arnold is entirely innocent, they will activate a counter-program which will gradually restore his life to normality. If the team becomes conspicuous they may become subject to a similar program, or to other harassment. If pressed, the intelligence agencies will admit that someone has apparently managed to gain access to their computer system, to activate the program against Arnold.

There is no way of reaching Paul Danvers or his superiors in this scenario. However, it establishes the existence of a powerful and secret force, setting the stage for future episodes.

**The Elite:** This organization is a simple example of a secret power. There are six levels of authority, organized on a cell basis:

1: Agents in Place. Company directors, senators, crime bosses, presidents of small republics, and other political and economic leaders. They are controlled by blackmail, brainwashing, and other means. They know nothing of the scope and scale of The Elite.

2: Mobile Agents. These are generally messengers, assassins, and other tools of The Elite. They have a slightly better idea of the scale of the organization, but know nothing of the higher authorities, apart from their field directors. Most agents are ex-CIA, ex-KGB, or ex-Mafia, and think that they are still employed by these organizations. Paul Danvers, in the scenario example above, is a mobile agent. He believes that he works for the CIA.

3: Field Directors. These operatives each control two or three mobile

agents or agents in place. Their main function is as a cut-out, making it difficult to reach Initiates through the mobile agents. Like mobile agents, they think that they are employed by the CIA or other organizations.

4: Initiates. Junior members of The Elite. They are all wealthy, well-established members of society, with influential business or political connections. They know of the existence of The Six, and are candidates for promotion to The Six if members die. They know that they will be killed for any breach of discipline or security, and a common trait is utter ruthlessness with their inferiors and non-members of The Elite. Most would die before revealing any information about The Six.

5: The Six. A group of rich old men, based somewhere in Europe (Bavaria?). None have any public status, but they control the fate of nations. The Six are responsible for the sinking of the Titanic (as a means of eliminating some of the more important passengers), 27% of disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle, the abandonment of the U.S. Skylab program, the current world recession, U.S. and Soviet foreign policy, and the introduction of the phrase "Have a nice day." Their main goal is power, partly for its own sake and partly to safeguard their fortunes. Optionally The Six may be the servants of an ultimate (and entirely secret) leader, Number One, whose existence is unknown to Initiates.

6: Number One (optional). Actually an Outer God in human form, probably Nyarlathotep. His ultimate end is the destruction of the human race in a nuclear war, and he is subtly steering The Six towards this goal. If this option is used there should be some indication of cult activities at Initiate level, to give investigators (and the world) a chance of surviving the campaign. Ideally such a campaign should include some normal scenarios, to allow characters to gain experience and spells. This will only be one of several schemes initiated by Nyarlathotep, all equally dangerous.

#### Further Sources

*The Illuminati* Novel trilogy,  
Robert Wilson & Robert Shea  
*The Killer Elite* Novel,  
Robert Rostand, filmed  
*Illuminati* Game, Steve Jackson

## POWER STRUCTURE of THE ELITE

Number One  
The Six  
Initiates  
Field Directors  
Agents  
(in place and mobile)

*A Feast Unknown\** Novel,  
Philip Jose Farmer  
*Lord of the Trees/The Mad Goblin†*  
Novels, Philip Jose Farmer  
*Behind the Walls of Terra\*\**  
Novel, Philip Jose Farmer  
*Down the Programmed Rabbit Hole*  
Non-fiction, Anthony Haden-Guest  
*Matt Helm: The Intriguers*  
Novel, Donald Hamilton  
*Gulf* Story, Robert A. Heinlein  
*Lost Legacy* Novel, Robert A. Heinlein  
*The Prisoner* British TV series  
*Shadows Of Yog-Sothoth* Module  
for *Call Of Cthulhu*, Chaosium

#### Notes:

\*This novel uses explicit language and scenes which some readers may find offensive.

†These novels are often published in one volume. They are a sequel to *A Feast Unknown*, but are suitable for younger readers.

\*\*Part of the "World Of Tiers" series.

#### OTHER THEMES

Many other areas of the horror/science-fiction genre are suitable for incorporation into a *Call Of Cthulhu* campaign. Brief descriptions of a few of the most entertaining possibilities follow:

##### That Old Black Magic

The battle between good and evil, expressed as a conflict between the investigators and Satanists. A 1920's setting is entirely appropriate to this variant, and incorporation into a normal campaign is easy.

Sources: *The Devil Rides Out* (Dennis Wheatley), *Operation Chaos* (Poul Anderson), *The Magicians* (James Gunn).

##### Ghost-Hunters

Many 1920's novels stress the role of

ghosts in supernatural activities. An interesting campaign might revolve around a group of investigators who are active in psychical research, as they deal with real (and fake) mediums, benign and evil spirits, and other manifestations of the afterlife. If the possibility of benign spirits is acceptable to the Keeper, the investigators may even be befriended by a ghost who will aid them in future adventures. Again, this variant is easily incorporated into a normal campaign.

Sources: *Topper* (et seq., Thorne Smith), *Ghosts* (Ed McBain), *Ghost Breaker* (Ron Goulart), *Sapphire And Steel* (British TV series), *Ghostbusters* (film, Columbia, 1984), *Ghostbusters* (game, West End).

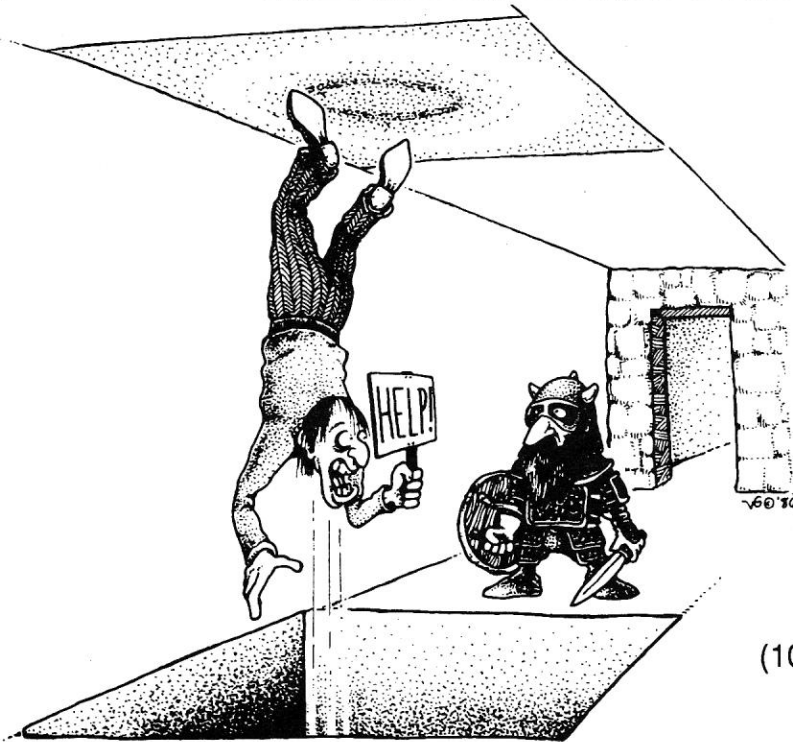
##### Paths Of Glory

There is a moderately extensive body of work dealing with supernatural activities during World War II. While such a setting is not ideally suited to a long life for investigators, an occasional adventure in this era (possibly entered via some sort of time-travel spell, as in *Shadows Of Yog-Sothoth*) may be rewarding. Incorporation into a normal campaign is simple, provided that the investigators are unable to bring back too much information or equipment from the future.

Sources: *The Keep* (film, U.S. 1983), *The Compleat Werewolf* (stories, Anthony Boucher), *Behind Enemy Lines* (game, Companions), *The Haunted Tank* (comics, DC).

Many other themes are possible, from Western scenarios (in the style of *High Plains Drifter*) to adventures in parallel worlds dominated by magic (as in the Lord D'Arcey stories of Randall Garrett, and Poul Anderson's *Operation Chaos* and *A Midsummer Tempest*). As already stated, the main requirement is a consistent and internally logical mythos, preferably one involving horrific rewards for failure. If this requirement is met, a variant *Call Of Cthulhu* campaign will be both entertaining and challenging.

**Acknowledgements:** The title of this article is derived from a song by David Bowie. "They're Coming!" is a quote from the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. *Some of Your Blood* is the title of a novel by Theodore Sturgeon. "Perfectly normal paranoia" is a quote from *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. □



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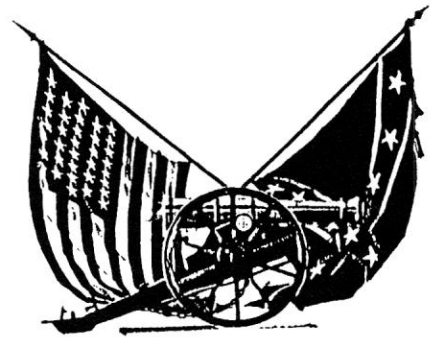
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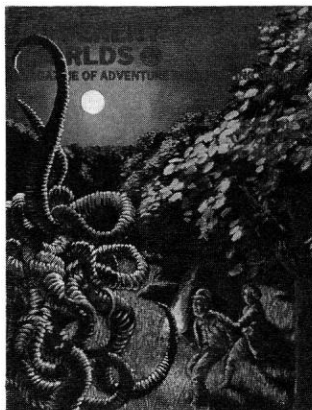
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**Issue 19: Feb '82.** Special Cthulhu Issue. "Call Of Cthulhu Designers' Notes" by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis. "Guns Against Cthulhu." A Cthulhu scenario by Sandy Petersen. "The Gang Leaders." "Adapting Thieves' World to Heroes Of Olympus" by B. Dennis Sustare. Review of Call Of Cthulhu.

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**Issue 25: Nov '82.** "Divination Skills." "The Calendar & Your Campaign World" by John T. Sapienza, Jr. "Effects of Mass in Traveller" "Humor & Rumor at GENCON XV." "Fun at Fantasy

Role-Playing Conventions" by Ken Rolston. "ORIGINS '82 Scrapbook." "Game Designers' Guild Banquet & Beer Bash." "Illusion: Theory & Practice." "Adventure By Design: Outlining Your Ideas" by Paul Jaquays. Review of Man, Myth & Magic.

**Issue 26: Jan '83.** Special Norse Issue. "Psychic Powers for Call Of Cthulhu." "Battleriders vs. Traveller Battleships." "Norse Religion in Fantasy Role-Playing Games." "The RuneQuest Cult of Odin." "The Undead of Norse Folklore." "Adventure By Design: Ad-Lib Adventuring." Reviews of Alma Mater and Recon.

**Issue 27: Mar '83.** Special Urban Adventure Issue. "FRP Town Design Survey" by Ken Rolston. "Introduction to the City of Pavis" by Greg Stafford and Steve Perrin. "Thieves' World Mini-Supplement: The Empty Buildings of Sanctuary." "Mob Leaders." "Thoth's Dagger: Scenario for Call Of Cthulhu." "The Aztecs: Dressed for a Flowery Death." Reviews of Swordbearer and Daredevils. "Adventure By Design: Designer, Entertain Thyself" by Greg Stafford.

**Issue 28: Apr '83.** Special Player-Character Issue. "Dragon Character Class for Dungeons & Dragons" by John T. Sapienza, Jr. "Winged Humanoids." "The Angels: A Winged Race for DragonQuest." "Role-Playing Nonhumans." Role-Playing Humans" by John T. Sapienza, Jr. "Other Senses" by Sandy Petersen. "The RuneQuest Cult of Taigaluk the Hunter." "H.P. Lovecraft in Call Of Cthulhu." "Gloranthan Military Experience for RuneQuest Player-Characters" by Greg Stafford. "Violence in Role-Playing." "Live Role-Playing." "Contact in Top Secret." "Adventure By Design" by Sandy Petersen.

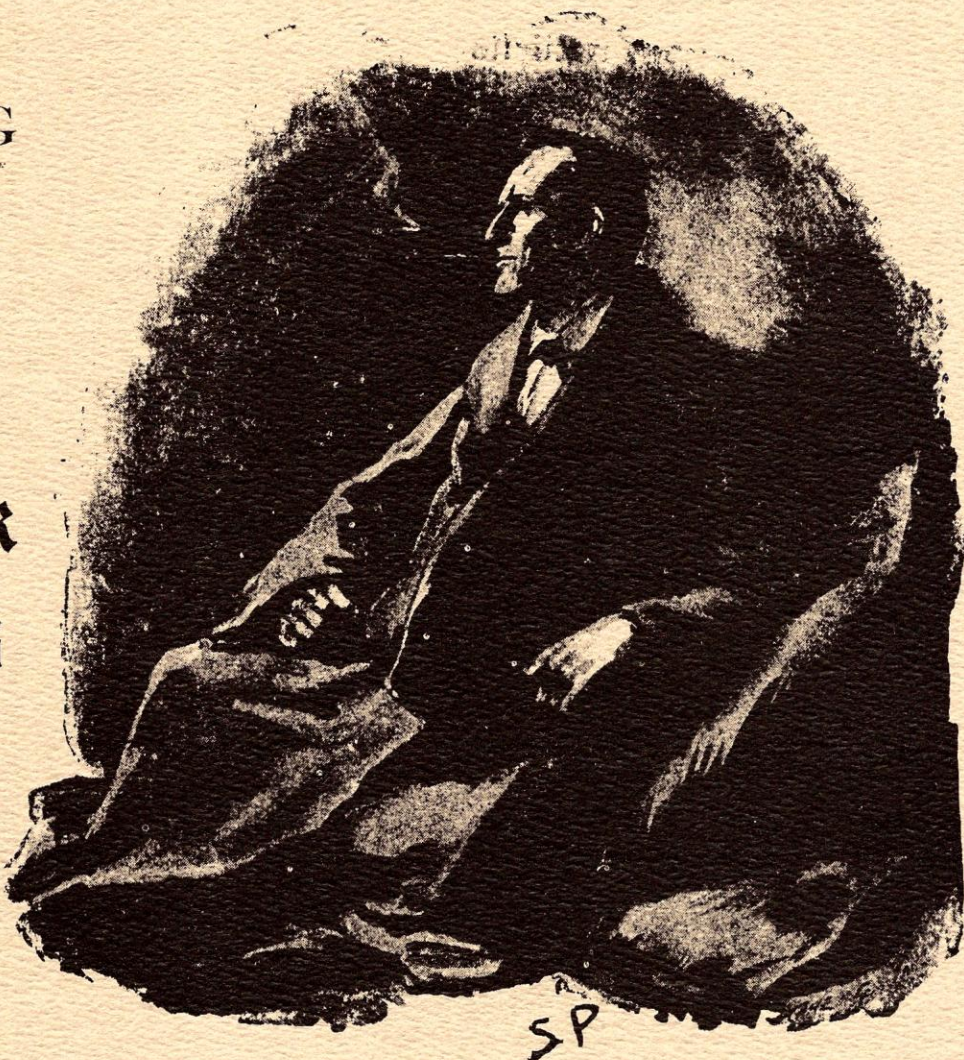
**Issue 29: Jun '83.** Special World-Building & Campaign Creation Issue. "Ringworld Preview" by John Hewitt. "Building The Campaign: A Literary Model." "The World of Slobbovia" by Greg Costikyan. "The Entebor Campaign." "Godwar: How to Run a Multiverse Campaign." "Pandora: Rational World Creation." "Variant Combat Rules for Call Of Cthulhu." "Adventure By Design: Gamemastering on a Budget" by Ken Rolston. Reviews of Star Frontiers and Gangbusters.

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We all arrived at Baker Street at the appointed time and Mrs. Hudson let us in. As we enter, much to our astonishment, we observe Dr. Watson holding and feeding a baby! As we stand staring at this phenomenal sight, we hear Holmes’s welcome.

“Come in gentlemen, and remove your coats! Wiggins, would you be so kind as to pour the tea this morning? Watson is a little busy!”

We all settle in while awaiting Holmes’s explanation of the little one’s presence.

By Dave & Frankie Arneson

Illustrated by Sidney Paget

(reprinted from *The Strand magazine*)

“Gentlemen,” says Holmes, “I’m sure you are all wondering who our small guest is and why he is here. Early this morning, the bell rang and Mrs. Hudson answered the door. Watson and I then heard her cry out. Straight away she brought to us this basket which contained the infant along with this note.”

*“PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY BABY  
I CAN NOT DO SO NOW!!!”*

Holmes passes the note around for us to examine.

“We heard no carriage but I observed a woman wearing a dark cloak darting around the corner house as we entered the street. Aside from her there was no one else on the street and we did not see the woman’s face. The infant was wrapped in this blanket with this ring pinned on it.” Holmes turns to Watson and asks, “Well Watson, do you have anything to add?”

“The only time I have seen a blanket like this Holmes, was when I served on the Northwest Frontier. The natives in Afghanistan used blankets like this one. As for the ring, all I can add is that the ruby, if real, is of great value!”

“Thank you Watson,” says Holmes as he turns towards the rest of us, “Well gentlemen, I believe that you have enough information to begin your investigation. Dr. Watson and I have some other matters that require tidying up but I will contact you directly in the usual way. Good luck gentlemen, I’m sure you will find this to be a most interesting case.”



## PERSONAL, &amp;c.

TO A. D. S.—LETTER RECEIVED.  
Many thanks—E. V. S.

NATIONAL HOSPITAL for CONSUMPTION, on the Separate Principle, Ventnor, Undercliffe, Isle of Wight.—The Board of Management gratefully ACKNOWLEDGE the RECEIPT of a further DONATION of TEN GUINEAS from James Shand, Esq., in and of the funds of this Hospital. ERNEST MORGAN, Secretary. Offices, 34, Craven-street, Charing-cross, W. C.

ALTERATION of ADDRESS.—The Secretary of the SANITARY ENGINEERING and VENTILATION COMPANY notifies that, owing to the re-numbering of Victoria-street, all communications relating to sanitary survey and ventilating works should be addressed to, Victoria-street, Westminster. Telegrams, Sanitation, London—HORACE CARTER, Secretary.

THE TRUSTEES, EXECUTORS, and SECURITIES INSURANCE CORPORATION, Limited.—The Corporation are prepared to act as Executors and Trustees, under Wills, Settlements, and other instruments, and where necessary, individual Directors will be appointed jointly with the General Manager to carry out the Trusts.

J. A. STERLING, General Manager  
Winchester-house, London, E. C.

## ENTERTAINMENTS, &amp;c.

CRYSTAL PALACE CAT SHOW.—The 23rd NATIONAL CAT SHOW will be OPEN TO-DAY (Wednesday), from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. No extra charge. Larger number of entries than ever.

PADEREWSKI will give a PIANO-FORTE RECITAL, at St. James's-hall, on Tuesday afternoon next, October 27th, at 3 o'clock. Tickets 10s. 6d., 5s., 3s., 2s., and 1s., at Tree's office, 23, Picadilly, and usual Agents.—Daniel Mayer, 180, New Bond-street, W.

MOORE and BURGESS MINSTRELS.—Brilliant success of the RENEWAL of the OLD MINSTREL SONGS of years long past. Houses crowded to repletion at every performance. Reserved seats can be booked a month in advance.

MR. EUGENE, STRATTON, the Popular Comedian, will SING his new and immensely successful whistling song, called Whistling Susanna, and appear in Brandon Thomas's new and charming song and dance, I Love a Lovely Gal, I Do, at every performance given by the MOORE and BURGESS MINSTRELS, at the St. James's-hall.

MADAME TUSSAUD'S EXHIBITION, adjoining Parker-street Station.—MEET of the HOUNDS, H.M. The Queen at Home, the late C. S. Parnell, M.P., and over 400 Portraits in wax, scenes, tableaux, &c.

ROYAL NAVAL EXHIBITION.—GRAND NAVAL BATTLE—Lake.

## ART EXHIBITIONS, &amp;c.

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR EXHIBITION (120 choice drawings, by 43 artists) NOW OPEN. Admission (including catalogue), 1s. The Japanese Gallery, 23, New Bond-street, W.

PARIS SALONS, 1891.—The ANNUAL EXHIBITION of selected PAINTINGS NOW OPEN. Destugue's Slave Market, Cairo, and a hundred others. Continental Gallery, 167, New Bond-street. Admission 1s., including catalogue.

MESSRS. HENRY GRAVES and Co. beg to announce that the largest collection of PROOF ENGRAVINGS, after all the best known ancient and modern painters, can be seen in their extensive GALLERIES, 6, Pall-mall.

## CAUTIONS AND NOTICES

CAUTION.—BRAND and Co.'s ESSENCE of BEEF, Turtle Soup, and other specialities for invalids. Beware of imitations. No connexion with any other establishment. Sole address, 11, Little Stanhope-street, Mayfair, W. Established 1835.

NOTICE.—DINNEFORD'S FLUID MAGNESIA.—This well-known remedy for acidity, heartburn, and indigestion can now be procured at all the principle pharmacies of Europe.

NOTICE.—DOULTON WARE.—As inferior imitations of their celebrated ART POTTERY are being introduced, Messrs. DOULTON beg to inform the public that their Art manufactures invariably bear an impressed stamp, "Doulton, Lambeth," or "Doulton, Burslem."

SPECIAL NOTICE.—PIMMS' NATIVE OYSTERS.—Messrs. Pimms and Co. beg respectfully to inform their patrons that the season of 1891-2 for their finest selected native oysters has commenced. Oysters specially selected for invalids and packed into quarter barrels, containing three dozen, can be despatched to all parts of the United Kingdom. Price list on application to Pimms', 3, 4, and 5, Poultry, London, E. C.

## MISCELLANEOUS

EGYPT.—A clergyman, experienced in Eastern travel, proposing to visit Egypt and ascend Nile to Second Cataract, would be glad to take CHARGE of THREE YOUNG NOBLEMEN or GENTLEMEN for TRIP. Intends leaving England about 26th December. Duration of tour two to three months. References kindly permitted to the Lord Archbishop of York. Address F.R.G.S., Country Club, Hereford.

WINDFALL TIMBER PURCHASED by EAST and SON, Berkhamstead, Herts.

BLANKETS from AFGHANISTAN.—New arrivals. The FINEST BLANKETS in the WORLD, POPULARLY PRICED to our patrons. Largest selection in the kingdom.—WHITELEY'S DEPARTMENT STORE, 71, Beech-street, London E. C.

## ENGLISH HOTELS

LONDON.—NORRIS'S FAMILY HOTEL, Addison-road Station, Kensington, W. Easy access to all parts of London. Private suites for families; also bed rooms with use of coffee room and drawing room.

LONDON.—LAY'S HOTEL, Surrey-street, Strand. For families and gentlemen. Old-established, quiet, and central, with moderate charges. Tariff on application. Under the personal supervision of the proprietress, Mrs. LAY.

NORWOOD (UPPER).—The QUEEN'S HOTEL, near the Crystal Palace. Specially adapted suites of apartments for families and permanent residents. Winter boarding terms, from three guineas. A limited number of single rooms at 2½ guineas.

OXFORD.—MITRE HOTEL, one of the most economical, first-class hotels in the kingdom.

## RUBIES FOUND ON THE BANKS OF THE THAMES

TWO RUBIES have been found along the shores of the Thames. Scotland Yard has, so far, been unable to find out where they came from. There are rumors that the jewels might have come from the fabulous Agar Treasure.

Crowds of treasure hunters and other curiosity seekers are to be found along the banks of the Thames. As a result the Police have increased their patrols along the River Thames. These patrols have been begun in an effort to prevent persons in the crowds from falling into the river or otherwise injuring themselves.

## SOCIAL EVENT OF NOTE

MRS. THOMAS Kates has returned to London with her son following the death of her husband Colonel Thomas Kates. Colonel Kates contracted a rare disease while on duty in Afghanistan. He expired a short time later. Col. Kates had seen long service along the Northwest Frontier and through the Kyber pass in Afghanistan.

Colonel Murray, Mrs. Kates's father, arranged for his daughter and his grandson to return to London for a much needed rest. The ordeal of remaining in India would have been difficult for them. Mrs. Kates will be staying at Halliday's Private Hotel until proper arrangements can be made for them.

## AREA SE

## 64 SE

Grace and Martha Pratt show us into their living room. Once seated comfortably, the ladies have tea set out for us.

"We took Catherine in after we met her at a local Ladies Tea. Her father had sent her here on a holiday. The poor dear. That hotel just was not the best place for a baby. After hearing about her situation we just could not let her continue to stay at the hotel and so we convinced her to stay here with us."

"Is there anything else that you can tell us about Catherine?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh my, yes!" says Grace, a very stout woman mature in years. "The poor child had spent years in a boarding school. In fact, all of her growing up years were spent there. Then, after she finished school, she went to India to be with her father. Once in India she met the dashing and handsome Colonel Kates. He was very kind to her and they were soon married. Within the first year the baby was born. Such a beautiful child he is too! It is so sad. Shortly after the child was born the Colonel contracted some rare tropical disease and succumbed to it. Catherine's father then sent her and the child back here to England for a much needed rest."

"Have you seen Catherine lately Mrs. Pratt?" asks Wiggins.

"No, we haven't. It is very strange. Two days ago, she returned here without the child. She would not speak to us at all.

"She kept repeating in a quiet voice that everything would be alright now. That a Dr. Watson would take care of little Tom." We looked at each other in surprise. She continued, "We think little Tom is in the hospital but Catherine did not say for sure. She then packed up all of her things and left. Catherine told us as she left that she could not talk to us now but that she would be in contact with us. In fact we have not heard a word from her since she left here that day. We do hope that she and her little Tom are alright. We are very worried about him!"

"I am sure that we will hear from her soon. She seems like such a sensible girl," says Grace.

"Would it be alright to see the room where Catherine and the baby stayed?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh my, yes! We have had it cleaned up but you are more than welcome to look round," says Martha.

As we enter the room we see that it is a brightly lighted room of medium size. A brief search reveals nothing out of the ordinary until Wiggins spots a small neat stack of note paper.

"Would it be alright to use a sheet of this paper to make a note to myself?"

"Yes, take whatever you need."

"Catherine left it behind when she packed and we do not use that colour ourselves."

As we are about to depart Wiggins asks the ladies one last question. "Did Catherine ever tell you the baby's full name?"

"As a matter of fact she did. The baby's name is Thomas, Thomas John Kates. The first name is the same

as her husband's. The second name is for Dr. Watson, an associate of Catherine's father. I believe the two men met during her father's campaigns along the Kyber Pass. A brother officer whose life her father saved. I wonder if it is the same Dr. Watson that Catherine said was taking care of little Tom now? I cannot, now, recall the story exactly," says Martha.

We reassure the ladies that there is probably nothing to worry about and will keep them informed of any developments. We then thank the ladies for their hospitality and take our leave.

## AREA SW

## 8 SW

"Well, well, gentlemen. What does my brother have you working on this time?" asks Mycroft Holmes.

"It would appear, sir, that a baby was left on Mr. Holmes's doorstep this morning," answers Wiggins.

"A baby you say? A bit out of my brother's league is it not?"

"It is not the baby that we've come to discuss with you. Rather we are concerned with Mr. H.R. Murray. He has not been to his laboratory today and we were wondering if you could tell us anything about him."

"All we know is what Mr. Holmes has told us."

"Well, let me ponder this for a moment," says Mycroft. "The only additional information that I can recall is that Murray has a younger brother who is overseas. His brother has been out of the country serving in the army, I think in Afghanistan. In fact the paper had a short piece in it a few days ago. The article mentioned Murray's brother and his daughter. I believe it said something about her husband having died. I am not clear on all the details as I only glanced at it.

"Murray has no other relatives that I know of. I do know that H.R. Murray has one of the greatest minds in criminology I have ever seen!"

Wiggins thanks Mr. Holmes for his time and we depart.

## 13 SW

"What can we do for Mr. Holmes today, gentlemen? I am in quite a hurry and don't have much time," says Inspector Lestrade.

"We were wondering if Jonathan Small or any of his associates have been let out of prison lately?" asks Wiggins.

"Good heavens, no! Whatever would have given you such an idea as that. That crowd will not be getting out for the rest of their lives."

"What about Billy Williams?" asks Wiggins.

"Billy is back on the streets. He was Small's cellmate in prison, but Billy's not part of Small's mob. The last we heard about Billy was that he was working near St. James' Park and going straight."

With that we leave Inspector Lestrade's office after thanking him for his time.

## 15 SW

We arrive at the hotel. We see a man sitting behind the

counter, apparently the hotel clerk. He is of medium height and neatly dressed.

"Excuse me," says Wiggins. "I'm looking for a Mrs. Kates. Would she be in, please?"

"Mrs. Kates is no longer here." A man of few words, obviously.

"Do you know where she might be staying now?" we ask.

"I will see," he replies. He then turns round and opens a large brown hotel registration book that is sitting on a shelf behind him. "She is now at 22 Vincent Street," he states curtly.

With that he turns round and continued the work that he was engaged in before we entered. We look at him, somewhat surprised, and leave.

#### 22 SW

We enter Murray's lab but he is nowhere to be found. This is most unusual. We take the time to look around the lab thinking that he should return at any moment.

The room is quite a shambles! Drawers have been taken out of desks and spilled on the floor, several bottles have been tipped over, books strewn about, etc. Between the leaves of one of these books we find a note. It is written on the same type of paper as the note with the infant. This note says:

*"MEET ME AT ST. JAMES' PARK  
MOST URGENT!  
-C.M.K."*

We are able to match the handwriting on this note with that on the baby's.

Then, as we are about to leave, we find another note on the floor next to the waste paper basket. This one simply says:

*"THE SIGN OF THE FOUR"*

Before we leave the building, we encounter the cleaning custodian and ask if he has seen Mr. Murray this morning.

"I say, gents. He came runnin' out of here mutterin' to 'isself in a terrible rush. Liked to have knocked me over in his hurry. Kept talkin' about some'un named Park. Twern't like Mr. Murray a'tal. I've never in me born days seen 'im move so fast!"

#### 88 SW

Mr. Tims greets us as we enter Lambert's Jewellers.

"What can I do for you gentlemen this morning?"

Wiggins produces the ring for Mr. Tims to examine. "Have you ever seen this ruby ring before?"

Mr. Tims takes his glass and examines the ring carefully. "No I have not. However, this ruby is of exquisite quality and I have never seen its peer."

We thank Mr. Tims, recover the ring, and depart.

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#### AREA NW

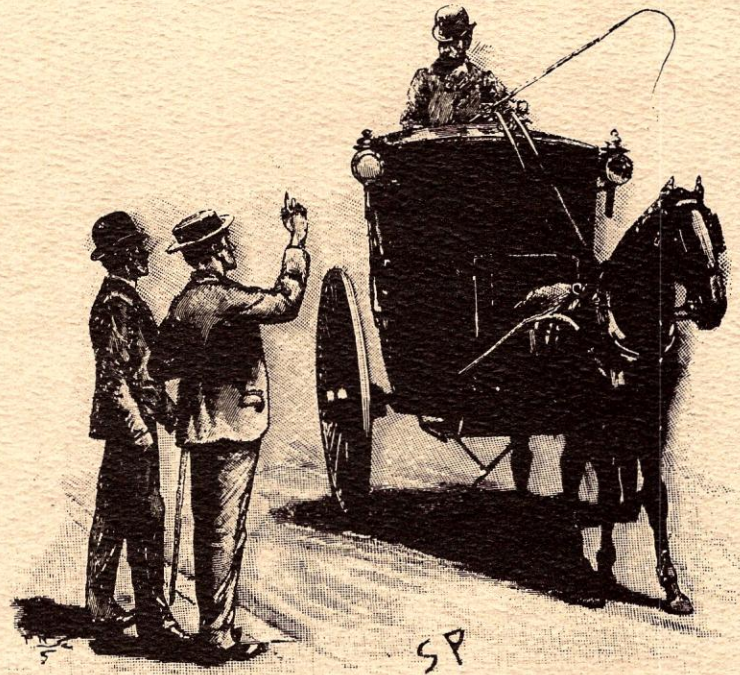
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#### 42 NW

We check the place where Mrs. Hudson found the baby but we see nothing out of the ordinary.

#### 90 NW

At Gross & Hankey's we are greeted by a thin nervous



man who comes up to us as we enter.

"Gentlemen, I am Mr. Swathmore. How may I be of service to you today?"

Wiggins takes the ring out of his pocket and shows it to him. Mr. Swathmore takes out his glasses and examines the ring.

"Oh my! Quite nice! Oh yes! I must say, gentlemen, that this setting is quite nasty for such a fine gem. May I offer my services to reset the ruby for you? I have several settings over here that you might be interested in."

"You have never seen this stone before?" asks Wiggins.

"Why no, never," says Mr. Swathmore.

Wiggins declines Mr. Swathmore's suggestions about remounting the ruby and as we leave we hear the sound of the front door slamming behind us.

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#### AREA WC

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#### 5 WC

Stopping at the stables we talked to the drivers but no one recalls delivering any fares on Baker Street early this morning.

#### 17 WC

Wiggins rolls up his sleeves at Somerset House and sets to work. After some time, Wiggins emerges.

"There isn't anything here that I could find. I just do not have enough to go on yet."

With that we continue on our way.

#### 75 WC

At Arner & Hailes we meet Mrs. Beverly Le Page.

"Good day gentlemen. What can I do for you today?" she asks.

Wiggins takes out the ring and shows it to Mrs. Le Page. "Have you ever seen a ring like this before?" he asks.

She takes the gem and examines it closely. "Oh my, yes! A lovely young lady brought this very ruby here last week to be mounted. I tried to convince her to have the stone mounted in a better setting but she declined. She

was only interested in determining the value of the stone itself."

"We would like to return the ring to her. Would you happen to have her name and street address?"

"Yes, I do believe that I can help you there. If you will give me a moment. . . Ah yes. Here it is! H.R. Murray of 22 Vincent Street."

We look at each other in amazement! Wiggins quickly thanks Mrs. Le Page and we leave.

#### 86 WC

Mrs. Larkin answers the door. As we enter the house, we are ushered into the sitting room. In that room we see two children playing around a table. Sitting near the fire is an elderly woman with a blanket, like the one in which the infant was found, wrapped around her legs. Wiggins engages Mrs. Larkin with his charm and after a few comments about rising prices we are able to leave.

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### AREA EC

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#### 20 EC

Henry Ellis is sitting behind his desk. Piles of papers and books are scattered all about the place.

"Well Wiggins. What big murder case are you and your friends working on now?" asks Ellis.

"It's no murder this time. Rather it seems to concern the Agar treasure. Have you heard any news about that of late?"

"The Agar treasure you say! Now it's been some time since that matter has come up. Only what I've seen in the paper. I think that they are just rumors about a few of the jewels being found. It is hard to believe that the jewels might actually be from the Agar collection."

"I was just wondering if you had heard anything," says Wiggins."

With that we leave a very curious Mr. Ellis.

#### 52 EC

The Raven and Rat is very busy as we enter. Nevertheless, Porky greets us cheerily.

"Pint for you gents?"

We all agree to accept his offer and take the opportunity to ask him if he has heard anything unusual or new.

"No mates, it's been pretty quiet. Billy Williams is back on the streets but rumor has it that he's gone straight and ain't takin' in any action. He's got a job at some park. St. James, I think.

"All the bloke ever talks about is the Agar treasure.

Seems Billy was in the same cell as a gent named Jonathan Small. Small had something to do with them sparklers and I guess it don't help with the papers talking about the Agar jewels either. 'Tis all that Billy ever talks about these days."

"The Agar treasure," says Wiggins, "it's been a long time since I've heard anything about that case. I remember when Mr. Holmes was working on it, though I was just a lad then. What does the paper say?"

Porky looks up but just then a customer calls for service. "I better be gettin' back to work, gents. I can't remember exactly when I read it in the paper but it wasn't too long ago."

With that Porky goes back to work so we finish our pints and soon leave.

#### 71 EC

At Whiteley's department store, we go to the bedding department. Wiggins quickly spots several blankets that are like the one in which the baby was found.

While we examine the blankets a thin well-dressed woman approaches and asks if she may be of any assistance.

"We are looking for someone who may have purchased a blanket like this one," states Wiggins.

The clerk's name is Mrs. Dutch and she proves to be quite helpful. "We carried only a few of these blankets as they are shipped here all the way from Afghanistan. So far we have sold only three and if you will allow me to check the records I can tell you who the buyers were."

We quickly agree to her offer.

"Oh yes. Here they are! One was purchased by those lovely Pratt sisters. They were both so excited when they saw these blankets. The other two buyers were a Diane Dobbs and an Elizabeth Larkin."

She looks up at us with a friendly smile. "These blankets are very warm and cozy and the price is a real savings. Could I interest you gentlemen in purchasing one for yourselves?"

"Thank you, Madame, but not at the present time," says Wiggins with great charm as we take our leave.

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### AREA E

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#### 52 E

As we ring the bell we look through the front window of the house and see a blanket lying over the back of a chair. That blanket is identical to the one in which the infant was found. No one answers the door. Apparently no one is home right now. Therefore, we continue on our way.

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## Quiz: Sherlock Holmes & the Baby

### Part One

1. What did the ruby ring have to do with this case?
2. What did the note "The Sign of the Four" have to do with this case?
3. Who was the baby's mother?
4. Who left the note "The Sign of the Four"?

### Part Two

1. What was the connection with H.R. Murray and the baby?
2. Who was the baby's grandfather?
3. In what story was the Agar treasure first mentioned?
4. What was the relationship between Dr. Watson and the baby's grandfather?

# Answers: Sherlock Holmes & the Baby

Holmes solved this case in 4 Clue Points. They were Porky Shinwell (52 EC), Whiteley's Department Store (71 EC), the Pratt sister's (64 SE), and H.R. Murray (22 SW).

## Part One

1. There were other rubies found along the Thames. (25)
2. This was the kind of note that Jonathan Small always left. (25)
3. Catherine Murray Kates. (25)
4. Billy Williams. (25)

## Part Two

1. H.R. Murray was the baby's uncle. (10)
2. It was Murray who saved Watson's life in Afghanistan. (10)
3. "The Sign of the Four." (10)
4. Murray had saved Watson's life while they were both in Afghanistan. (10)

# Solution: Sherlock Holmes & the Baby

WE ARE back at 221B Baker Street waiting for Mr. Holmes to arrive. Mrs. Hudson has brought up tea, Watson is going over some papers while seated at his secretary and we are warming ourselves by the fire. We hear the front door close and Holmes immediately enters the room.

"A most interesting case after all gentlemen, as I'm sure you have already figured out."

We all smile waiting to hear more.

"Well Watson, how was it to meet the grandson of the man who saved your life in Afghanistan?"

Watson is quite taken aback and almost drops his cup of tea. "Murray's grandson!" he sputters. "How did you figure that one out Holmes? I didn't even know that he had any children!"

With that Catherine Murray Kates enters the room accompanied by H.R. Murray.

"Please have a seat Mrs. Kates," says Holmes. "Wiggins, would you please bring up some tea for our guests?"

"Dr. Watson! What a pleasure to meet you," says Catherine Kates. "My father talked of you often and I knew from his descriptions of your nature that you would not place Thomas in a foundling home. I was sure that you would save a place for him until all this had been quite cleared up."

"Well . . . ah . . . yes . . . of course!" sputters Watson. "Why I would never send a baby to an orphanage unless I was sure that there was no other place for the poor child. Why it would be positively beastly to do such a thing . . . well . . . ah . . . er . . ."

We all smile kindly at Watson.

"Col. Murray is my brother and Catherine here is my niece," H.R. Murray adds. "I had not seen her since she was about Thomas's age."

"The most interesting part of this case is the ruby. The piece is cut in the Indian style, like the one in the Agar collection," says Holmes.

"The Agar treasure!" exclaims Wiggins. "I thought that the entire treasure had been lost in the Thames."

"Indeed it was!" adds Watson. "That is a case that I for one will never forget," he states emphatically.

"Well gentlemen you are both correct and also incorrect. It seems that Catherine had been walking along the river one day and found the ruby among some stones along the bank where the currents had washed it ashore. She contacted her uncle thinking that he might know

something about this particular gem," states Holmes. "The two of them had met a number of times to discuss what they should do with the ring. By the way, they would usually meet at St. James' Park, which I will get to in a moment.

"While we were meeting," says Murray, "someone had broken into my lab and had ransacked it looking for something. He must have followed me to my office. It was after that incident that I found a note with 'The Sign of the Four' written on it."

"After the break-in at Uncle Murray's lab," says Catherine, "I knew that it was not safe for us at the hotel. The Pratt sisters had invited us to stay with them and I accepted their kind invitation. I did not tell them about the ruby or anything else that happened. I did not want them to get hurt.

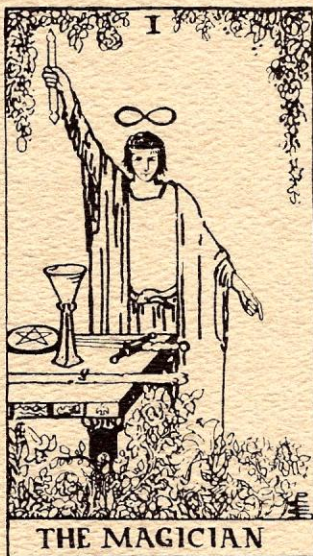
"The continued threats made me fear for my child's life and so I sought a safe place for him until matters had resolved themselves."

"The whole thing is quite elementary," says Holmes. "It was Billy Williams. He had heard the story of the Agar treasure from Jonathan Small with whom he had shared a cell. Since being released, Billy had been working in St. James' Park. When Catherine met with Murray at the park and Billy overheard them talking about the ring, Billy then became convinced that Murray had more of the jewels so he searched Murray's lab and also left the notes from 'The Sign of the Four.' Greed set in and Billy followed Murray and Catherine's every move. I was able to track Billy from one of the notes that he left at Murray's.

"Only Jonathan Small and his mob knew of 'The Sign of the Four' and the Agar treasure. Since all of them were still in prison, it had to have been someone in prison with them to whom they had told the tale. A check of the prison records showed that the only person with whom Small could have been in contact and had been released in the last month was Billy. When I found that Billy was also working near St. James' Park, the rest was easily deduced. Billy Williams is now back in prison and will not be bothering anyone for some time."

On that note there is a knock at the door. Opening the door we admit Mrs. Hudson who is carrying young Thomas. Catherine warmly thanks Mrs. Hudson. With that mother and child are happily reunited. We all observe this with warm smiles.

# TAROT & THE ART OF DIVINATION



**The Rider Tarot Deck** designed by Pamela Colman Smith under the direction of Arthur Edward Waite. The original and only authorized edition of the famous 78-card Rider Tarot Deck conceived in 1909. Each Minor Arcana card features a symbolic picture which facilitates card readings. Cards measure 2 1/4" x 4 1/4". Accurate color tones on each card. English titles. Complete with 44-page instruction booklet. (USGS-WR78 boxed \$10.00)

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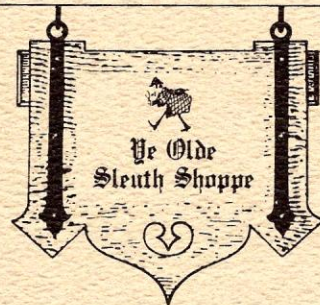
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**The Book Of Thoth** by The Master Therion (Aleister Crowley). Crowley's personal description of the Thoth Tarot Deck, or Tarot of the Egyptians, is based on medieval symbolism and ancient kabbalistic tradition. Originally published in an edition limited to 200 signed and numbered copies in 1944, it includes the theory of tarot, and descriptions of the Atu, or the Greater Arcana, and the Lesser Arcana. (USGS-BK17 softcover 287pp illustrated \$8.95)

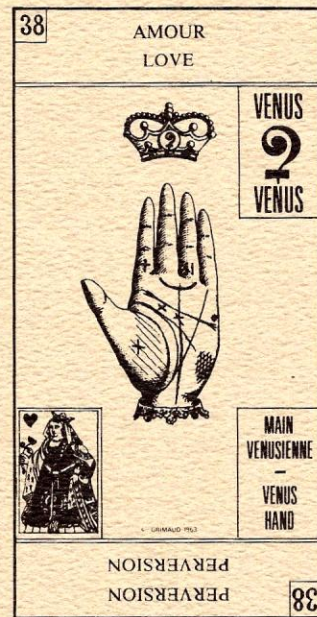
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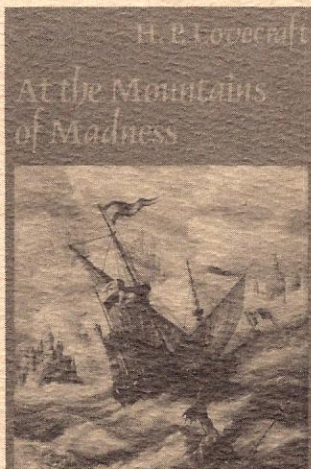
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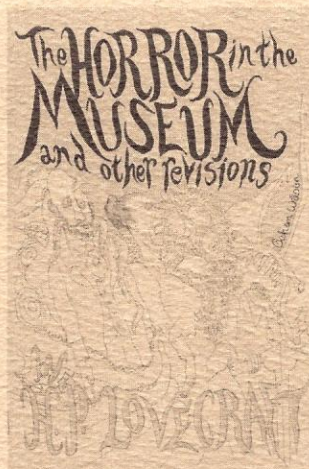
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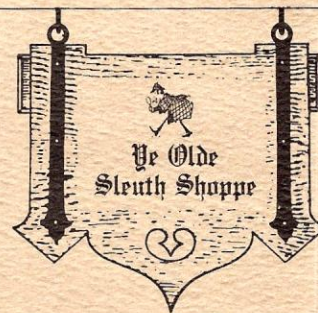
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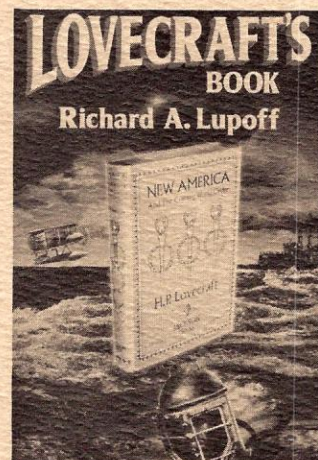
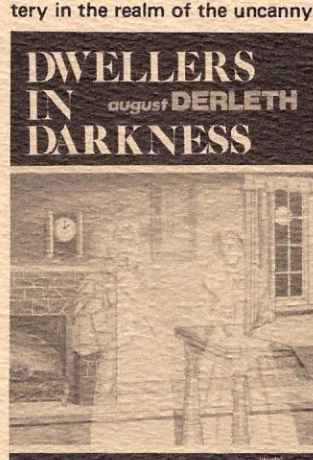
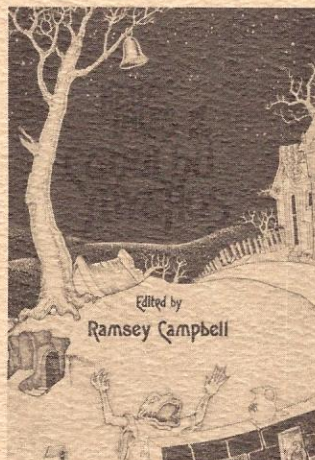
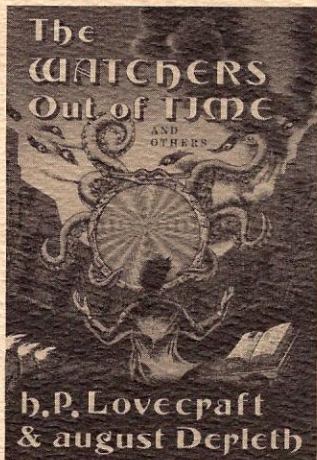
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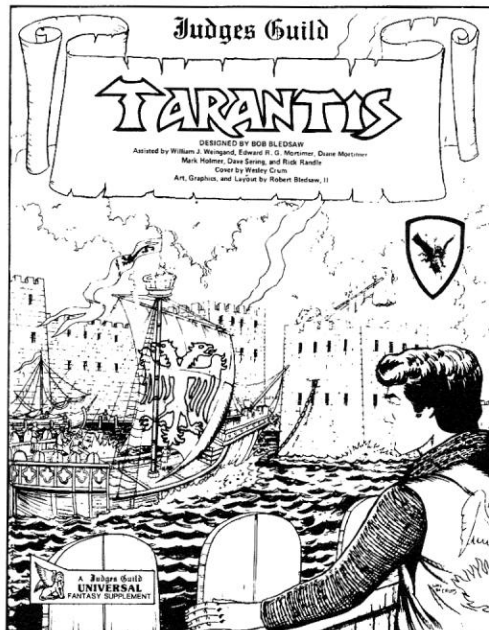
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# Game Reviews

Danger International/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles/  
Behind Enemy Lines/Psi World/Talisman/Black Morn Manor/  
Alone Against the Dark/Expedition To Zhodane/The Iycean  
Menace/The Lords Of Destiny/Holy Warriors/Siege



## The Modern Roleplaying Game

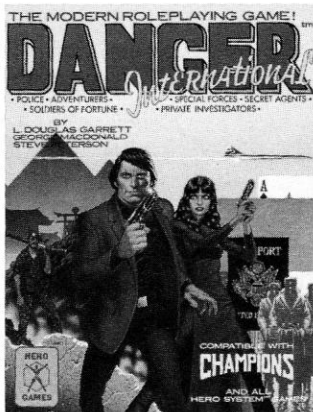
### DANGER INTERNATIONAL

By L. Douglas Garrett, George MacDonald, and Steve Peterson (Hero, \$14.95)

Reviewed by Scott A. Dollinger

*Danger International* is Hero Games' contribution to the ever-expanding number of role-playing games set in contemporary times. Games in this genre enable players to engage in adventures taken right from today's headlines, movies, and any number of action and adventure books. Ever want to be James Bond, Doc Savage, Sherlock Holmes, or Cat Shannon? A good contemporary game allows you all these possibilities and more because they provide the basic framework for role-playing without pigeonholing gamemasters into one type of campaign. They also provide excellent ways to teach the fundamentals of role-playing to those individuals who are not comfortable with the fantasy genre. I have found that this holds true for wives, girlfriends, and parents of game enthusiasts who might be persuaded to try role-playing but do not understand the internal logic system of a fantasy world. Contemporary games do not suffer from this problem because everyone has a fairly good notion as to what actions are possible and what the consequences of these actions are likely to be.

*Danger International* is one of the most comprehensive and realistic games I have ever reviewed. Players may create characters from any walk of life and occupation that is suited to modern-day adventurers: private investigators, mercenaries, spies, investigative reporters, etc. The character generation system is allocation type. Players start with the same number of points in all of their character attributes and are given more points with which to "buy"



skills or change stats. The point allocation system allows players to custom tailor their characters exactly the way they want them. The system allows two types of characters, the normal adventurer and the heroic character. The heroic character starts out with more points in his personal attributes.

The customizing process is enhanced by the fact that players may take points away from some stats and allocate them to others or use them to buy skills. Players may also gain more points by receiving physical, mental, or social disadvantages to their character. These disadvantages make for a much more interesting character and may even serve as a source of scenario ideas for the gamemaster.

Character skills are broken down into the standard practical, educational, and combat-based types but there are more of them than in most games, again reflecting the comprehensiveness and flexibility of the system. Combat skills include several varieties of martial arts and every conceivable type of weapons combat from brawling with a broken bottle to dog fighting with F-16s. The weapons lists are equally comprehensive.

Combat is resolved by both a basic and an advanced format. The basic format is strongly recommended unless the gamemaster is comfortably familiar with the Hero System. Both the basic and the advanced formats use lots of modifiers but they are easily assimilated within a few sessions and then combat is quickly resolved with sufficient realism for any but the most grisly player.

The process of character generation and learning to use the skills and combat systems is definitely

time consuming and gamemasters should allow one whole gaming session of about three to four hours for players to generate characters and run a few practice combats. Players who already play games that use the Hero System, i.e., *Champions*, *Justice Inc.*, *Fantasy Hero*, etc., will be sufficiently familiar with the system so that play may begin at the first meeting. Character generation is greatly facilitated by including skill packages, complete with disadvantages, for common adventuring types such as spies or private eyes. With a very little tailoring these packages effectively provide well-rounded characters quickly.

The rules also provide a wealth of ideas for scenario design. Sections on creating "scripted" adventures, i.e., the mercenary adventure or the spy adventure, the political state of the world, and important organizations are included. One solo scenario and several group scenarios are also included.

Scenario design for *Danger International* is made more intriguing because of its compatibility with other games. Besides the pre-

viously mentioned games by Hero, *Danger International* is also compatible with *Twilight: 2000* by GDW, *Daredevils* by FGU, *Mercenaries*, *Spies and Private Eyes* by Sleuth, *Call Of Cthulhu* by Chaosium, and *Middle Earth Role-Playing* by ICE. Such compatibility makes it possible to run nearly any kind of adventure imaginable. Just using the *Danger International* rules, gamemasters could base games in parallel universes where history is slightly different but technology is roughly the same. Imagine a campaign where the characters are resistance fighters in a world where Hitler won World War II or in a version of Orwell's *1984*. The rules are comprehensive and flexible enough to accommodate a truly creative gamemaster.

In conclusion *Danger International* is a comprehensive, realistic, and flexible system that suffers only minimally from an over-complicated presentation that could easily be fixed in a second edition. Even though the presentation is slightly awkward at times the merits of the game make *Danger International* the best game in this genre that I have seen to date. □



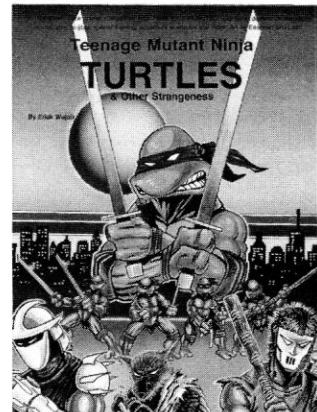
## TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES & OTHER STRANGENESS

By Erick Wujcik (Palladium, \$9.95)

Reviewed by Scott A. Dollinger

Unless some of you have never been to a comics shop, comics or gaming convention, or have not been living in a civilized portion of North America for the past two years, you have no doubt encountered Eastman and Laird's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. For the benefit of those individuals who fall into one of the fore-mentioned categories *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is an incredibly popular comic that is devoted to satirizing martial arts movies, the comic book genre, science-fiction and fantasy literature, and modern life and art in general through the exploits of Raphael, Leonardo, Michaelangelo, and Donatello, four turtles with abilities far beyond those of mortal, eh, turtles.

Due to an accidental exposure



to a radioactive substance the turtles mutate and gain humanoid features, stature, and intelligence. They are then found and raised by Splinter, a mutant rat and master of the art of ninjitsu, who in turn teaches them the art so they may combat the forces of evil.

Turtlemania is sweeping the nation. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. The two comic/game stores that I work at cannot keep turtle products of any type in stock. Back issues and

### GAME RATINGS

- ☆☆☆☆ Superb
- ☆☆☆ Mighty Fine
- ☆☆ Good
- ☆ Flop

reprints of the nearly impossible to get first three issues sell for incredibly high prices and a full line of associated merchandise has become available. It is hardly a surprise then, that a role-playing game based on the series should be released.

What is unusual is that Eastman and Laird have not taken the easy route to fast money and licensed the characters to a combat that would produce a hastily-made product to cash in on the current popularity of the characters. Instead they have maintained the high quality of the comic by licensing the characters to a smaller but well respected gaming company that takes their time and produces an excellent product. In this case the game *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness* was created by Palladium Books and the results are fantastic.

Players that are already familiar with Palladium's *Heroes Unlimited* superhero game will have no difficulty adapting to the turtles game as it was designed to be compatible with *Heroes Unlimited* and may be included as a sub-campaign in an already established *Heroes Unlimited* game.

The main difference between the game and the comic is that the game has players generate other mutated animals as characters instead of just running the turtles all the time. There are several advantages to this, one being the fact that if more than four people wish to play the game someone would not be able to play a turtle. Another advantage is that by emphasizing other mutants, gamemasters would feel less inhibited when they create their own campaign and are not compelled to stay within the storyline of the comic.

Stats for the turtles and other main characters are included so that players can play the turtles if they are so inclined.

The rules themselves have achieved a nearly perfect balance between thoroughness and playability. Character generation is quite detailed. Players first roll 3D6 for each of the eight character attributes: intelligence quotient (I.Q.); mental endurance (M.E.), a measure of how much mental and emotional stress a character can take and determines whether psionic powers are possible; mental affinity (M.A.), a measure of charm and persuasiveness; physical strength (P.S.); physical prowess (P.P.), a measure of dexterity and agility; physical endurance (P.E.); physical beauty (P.B.); and speed (SPD.), a measure of running speed and dodging ability. If any attribute score is 16 or better 2D6 are roll-

ed and added to the original score to produce extraordinary characters. Scores that are above 16 gain bonuses for actions that make use of the appropriate characteristics.

Next players randomly generate what type of animal they were before the mutation occurred and what agent caused the mutation. The number of animal types is large enough for anyone. Players can be from several categories of animals: urban, rural, wild, wild birds, or zoo animals and each category is well stocked with appropriate species.

The agent of mutation determines the type of background that the character is from and the type of education that was available to the character in the past and, coupled with I.Q. modifiers, the number of educated and secondary skills that the character may choose from. There are enough educated and secondary skills available to create nearly any type of character a player might wish for.

Players also have the ability to pick the degree to which their characters mutate. Three categories are possible: original form unchanged, partial biped stance and hands, and full biped and hands. The degree of human speech, use of hands, and human features are also chosen. To make up for obvious disadvantages and advantages between original animal stock the concept of biological energy points (BIO-E points) is introduced.

Essentially more BIO-E points

are given to smaller weaker creatures than to larger stronger ones. The BIO-E points are used to gain size and the degree of mutation of stature, features, hands, and speech as well as psionic abilities and natural animal abilities such as functional wings and claws. Small animals like mice have lots of BIO-E points so they can achieve the strength and stature to be viable characters. Large animals, such as bears or elephants, have less points and can give up size to gain more BIO-E points. Psionic skills are mostly related to communication and defense but a few offensive abilities are available for a high BIO-E point cost.

The combat system is fast and flexible but very comprehensive. The character determines initiative and the attacking character rolls a D20. Any roll greater than a 4 hits. If the roll is lower than the defender's armor rating the damage is taken off of the structural damage capacity (SDC) of the armor and then the SDC of the player. If the roll is higher than the armor rating it is taken off the defender's SDC and hit points. Starting hit points are 1D6 plus the P.E. score. As usual, when a character's hit points are gone death occurs. Defenders are given the opportunity to dodge, parry, or entangle when applicable. Special attacks for martial arts are possible and a glossary of ancient and modern weapons are given. In general the combat rules play very quickly and damage to hit points is recovered slowly

without professional help. If serious damage is taken, permanent disabilities may occur. The potential for lasting disabilities reflect the realism of this combat system as do the special attacks and fast firing rates for modern weapons.

The experience system used to advance levels is the best I have ever seen. This system definitely is designed with people who enjoy role-playing in mind. Players are rewarded for using their brains and character abilities instead of killing everything that moves. It is for all intents and purposes the same system found in *Heroes Unlimited*. Level progression is the same for all animal species and hit points are increased 1D6 per level gained and increased number of attacks are gained at higher levels.

There are very few flaws with this game. One of the only problems that I would like to see corrected is the addition of pages which give vital information and a sample character sheet suitable for photocopying. Such items reduce the wear and tear on the rulebooks and aid in record keeping for the gamemaster.

The art by Eastman and Laird in the rulebook is excellent and liberally distributed and the charts and graphics are easy to use. Five complete scenarios are included in the rulebook and the \$9.95 price tag makes *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness* one of the best buys on the market. □



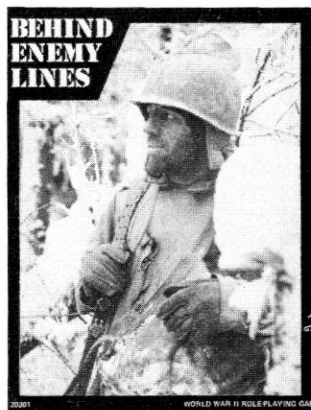
### World War II Role-Playing Game **BEHIND ENEMY LINES**

By William H. Keith, Jr., et al  
(Companions, \$20)

Reviewed by Dale L. Kemper

*Behind Enemy Lines* is the World War II entry into the ever-expanding role-playing game market. The present game is a reissue of the old FASA game whose rights were picked up by the Companions.

Compared to most role-playing games on the market *BEL* holds up fairly well. The game is complete and has been extensively playtested. For your money you receive a rather flimsy game box (I wouldn't put this one at the bottom of the stack of games in your closet) whose cover shows a bland photo of a cold GI standing in a snowy forest. A more interesting shot could certainly have been found to say the least. Upon opening the box you will see two handbooks, the Soldier's Handbook and the Commander's



Manual. There is also an Operations Manual with various scenarios and pre-rolled characters and an Infantry Reference Data folder containing all the pertinent tables needed to run the game.

The Soldier's Handbook contains the rules for character generation, very detailed character background rules, Basic and Advanced Army training, movement rules, and weapons rules and charts. It is illustrated with various photos from World War II and

shoulder patches from U.S. Army divisions. The Commander's Manual contains everything the gamemaster needs to run the game including judging character generation, movement, combat, rules for artillery, armor, weather, and various unit organizations for the German and American armies in Europe. The Operations booklet contains six scenarios, each with a tactical map and various gamemaster-characters. All the above is well organized and readable, geared basically to the beginning to intermediate player. The character generation routines, while lengthy, are explained well and easy to perform. The Commander's Manual includes many helpful hints on how to run a World War II European campaign, including keeping the "Big Picture" in mind and awarding decorations/promotions.

*BEL* comes packed with plenty of information. Although not as slick a production as some other games on the market, the true WW II infantry op enthusiast will look past this deficiency. The rules and charts seem quite

authentic and it isn't hard to see that a lot of work went into this system.

The game system doesn't seem that innovative, although it does get the job done. As in all role-playing games, the major variable in the amount of enjoyment you get out of the game centers around how good the gamemaster

is, not on the rules. Given a fairly competent gamemaster *BEL* will be quite an enjoyable experience as your squad of characters fights its way across France and into Germany! With a dedicated group the replay value of these rules is high.

Overall, *Behind Enemy Lines* is a good simulation of World War II

infantry combat in the European theater. For those who are interested in this subject *BEL* will be well worth the effort of reading the rules and familiarizing yourself with the system. There was talk of further supplements to this game when FASA was publishing it (such as a *Guns Of Navarone* adventure, British

commando rules, North Africa, 1942, etc.) but whether the Companions intends to support the reissue or not is unknown. Hopefully, they will. And it will be a good indication of the gaming public's acceptance of this game if we see some interesting supplements come out over the next few months. □



## Role-Playing Game of Psionic Powers

### PSI WORLD

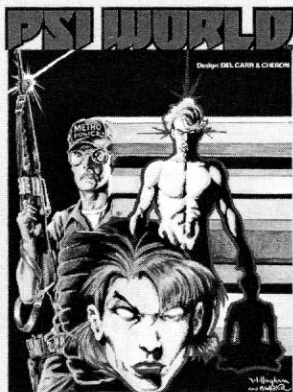
By Del Carr & Cheron  
(FGU, \$12)

Reviewed by Scott A. Dollinger

FGU has had the reputation for creating games that were so comprehensive and detailed and so full of tables and modifiers that only very experienced hobbyists could understand and play them. Games such as *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Aftermath!*, and *Space Opera* generally fell prey to such criticism; although they were all fine products. Lately, however, FGU has released several games, like *Flashing Blades* and *Psi World*, that even novice players and gamemasters will find easy to learn and fun to play. One additionally attractive feature is that these new releases carry a lower price tag for both the boxed rule sets and for supplementary modules than many other games that are the same size but do not sacrifice quality for the cheaper price.

*Psi World* is based on a rather old premise, role-playing people with extraordinary powers, but with a unique and appealing twist, it is left up to the gamemaster to decide whether the players are to be Psionics hunted by an oppressive government and bigoted populace, or hard-working government agents who are out to stop organized superpowered fanatics that are out to enslave the world. After stating both possibilities the gamemaster is told that unlike many other games that are in a fixed campaign setting *Psi World* is almost completely free of background "chrome" (their word, not mine) and that this will enable gamemasters to be less restricted in designing their scenarios.

To a great extent this is true because a highly creative gamemaster can easily work the given rules and guidelines into a comprehensive campaign without that much effort. One way to do this is to follow their suggestion and set the campaign in our world but in the near future, anywhere from ten to fifty years, and use the



technology and weapons with which everyone is familiar.

Another excellent suggestion is that the gamemaster set the campaign in real or familiar places and use real maps. Imagine compiling an entire world or campaign area with the most detailed political, topographical, and road maps in any game, already done for you for pennies because maps can be obtained for free from motor clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, or photocopied at any halfway decent library.

Character generation is simple in *Psi World* and it is greatly facilitated by the character sheets which are provided in the game. Character attributes are rolled for—strength, agility, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, and will—using 2D10. Psionics are chosen by the player and if chosen 2D10 are rolled for that attribute as well. Modifiers to initiative, defense, damage, and attacks for projectiles and hand-held weapons as well as general attack bonuses are then figured.

Hit points are determined by combining attribute and random die rolls. Hit points are found for individual hit locations as well as overall. When damage exceeds a hit point total in a specific area shock may occur. Special injuries may also occur. If overall hit points are exceeded unconsciousness followed by death occurs. Hit points are not increased by experience.

Attributes may be increased by training but it is difficult if the attribute score is high. No attribute may ever exceed 25. To gain one point on an attribute the current score is subtracted from 25

and the result or less must be rolled on D100. Training time is the attribute number expressed in weeks.

Players choose skills by first randomly determining the amount of education their character has had. This gives the type of skills that may be chosen from. Then players roll to gain skill points which may be spent to purchase all skills except psionics. The skills listed are adequate but gamemasters are told to freely add any skills they wish to the appropriate lists. Skills are increased by experience and new skills may be learned if players are willing and able to undergo uninterrupted training by qualified instructors.

Psionics are, of course, the main feature of this game and players will not be disappointed at the psi powers offered. Almost every power I have ever heard of is available to characters and again gamemasters are provided with guidelines for adding new powers. Psionic characters in this game are powerful! Characters are assumed to be in the upper ten percent of all psionics in power. Characters may choose one major discipline or two minor disciplines or, if they are power mad, they may roll to try and get a major and a minor or two major disciplines on the major table or an additional minor or major discipline on the minor table.

Having a major discipline entitles the user to use all of the ten abilities within that field immediately. The major disciplines are precognition, telepathy, teleportation, telekinesis, self-awareness, and healing. Each use of psionics requires power. Psi power starts at double the psi attribute score and may be increased after 250 points worth of psionic usage. The higher the number of power points, the harder it is to gain more, but this really isn't much of a problem until the character has over 75 power points.

One important problem is that characters may practice with their powers in non-combat situations and still gain power. If players abuse this ability the gamemaster should take steps in the game to have the character come to the attention of the Psi Police.

Another area with which I have a bit of problem is the reverse

healing. For every curative function listed there exists an opposite damage producing function. As a mental health professional I question the probability that anyone who is sensitive enough to the life force to be able to sense and restore it would under any circumstance harm another human being with such a power. I might concede that if such actions are used to save more lives, then the healer might harm someone but they would be loathe to do so. This is a matter for the individual gamemaster to decide but it does tend to put some limits on an incredibly powerful character—a character with the ability to literally give and take life at will.

Combat is greatly simplified but is still fairly thorough. All martial arts are dealt with under the generic term "unarmed combat." Unarmed combat is broken down into throws, throws/pins, throws/chokes, and strikes. This subdivision is not as detailed as many players like but it isn't nearly as cumbersome as many systems. A flying sidekick is a strike, a dragon punch is a strike, a leg sweep is a throw, etc. If players want more realism let them describe whatever they want to do, for the gamemaster it's still just one of the throws or strikes and the results are the same, but it will keep the players happy. Hand-to-hand weapons and projectile weapons are also covered. Hits are scored if the attacker rolls under his skills score for the particular attack with modifiers taken into account. There are sufficient modifiers to make combat fairly realistic but not cumbersome.

There is no provision for Psionic vs. Psionic in combat nor for any kind of Psionic duel, which I thought would be pretty neat, but a good gamemaster could easily devise one. Psionics also do not get any bonus on their initiatives when they use their powers against non-Psionics, which is fine because they are powerful enough without getting any more special privileges.

A scenario pack is also included in the set detailing the designers' playtest world. It features one scenario designed for Psionic characters to challenge the govern-

ment and one for government agents to catch criminal Psionics. Both scenarios are quite good and provide excellent examples of how to create a *Psi World* cam-

paign. I would like to see a campaign supplement released using the world that the designers set up because it works so well.

The set comes with a rulebook,

a scenario book, a gamemaster screen, and a really nice heavy-duty character sheet suitable for photocopying. All the books and the box are illustrated by comic

artist/writer Matt Wagner, originator of the very popular *Mage* comic book, and the entire package is very reasonably priced. It's a lot of fun for a little money. □



## The Magical Quest Game TALISMAN

By Robert Harris  
(Games Workshop \$18)

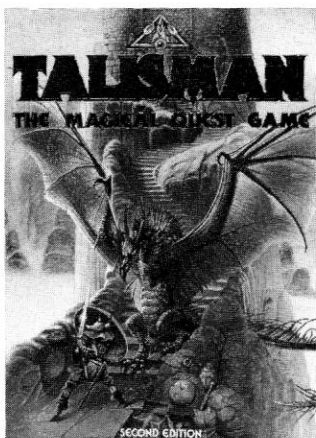
Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

*Talisman* is a spiffy, beer & pretzels fantasy boardgame from Games Workshop designed for two to six players. The object of *Talisman* is to reach the fabled Crown of Command and once there cause all other players to die, thus becoming the only survivor of the quest. This is accomplished by journeying through the Outer and Middle "Regions" of the fabled land represented by the game board; improving Strength, Craft, and Lives until one obtains a Talisman and is powerful enough to face the dire perils of the Inner Region where the Crown is located.

In design, *Talisman* is reminiscent of *Cosmic Encounters* in that the basic play itself is very straightforward yet each game played is different thanks to the variety of cards and characters available. This is the main strength of *Talisman*, you can play it a lot without getting tired of it, indeed it is the kind of game you look forward to playing. Having thus blown the all-important "well-what-does-this-stooge-think-of-it?" part of the review, I now invite the slothful to bail out while I examine the various elements of *Talisman* in greater detail.

Each player in *Talisman* plays one of 14 different fantasy characters, each with its own varying Strength, Craft, Special Abilities, and Alignment. Strength determines how tough the character is in Physical Combat; Craft is the measure of the character's ability in Psychic Combat and whether or not the character is capable of using Spells. Both can be improved in various ways throughout the game. Special Abilities are things unique to the player's character, usually things which alter some mechanic of the game in the character's favor. Alignment is the old *Dungeons & Dragons* Good, Evil, and Neutral trio. Alignment restricts the use of magic items and determines the effect of certain spaces on the board. It can also change during the game, sometimes with disastrous effects.

Characters in *Talisman* begin



with four "Lives" and when these Lives are gone, that character is dead. Lives, like Strength and Craft, can be improved during the game. A player whose character bites the broadsword may re-enter the game with a brand new character. Such a player is not necessarily bad off, indeed sometimes a new character can actually improve a player's chances of success.

Characters are represented by colorful cards and are either dealt at random or picked. It is a good idea to deal them the first few games, until players become familiar enough with their various capabilities to make intelligent choices. Some characters may seem a bit more powerful than others but the game has its own way of balancing things out to provide good competition.

Besides representing the characters the Character Cards also function as organizational tools. Strength, Craft, Lives, Objects, Gold, and Followers are all represented by either cards or counters which go in various spaces around the Character Card, all clearly marked. For movement on the board, each Character Card comes with a smaller equivalent that fits upright in a plastic base making a very colorful playing piece.

The *Talisman* board consists of three rectangular tracks, one set inside the other. The Outer Region track has 24 spaces, the Middle Region has 16, the Inner Region has eight. In the very center of these three rectangles sits the Crown of Command, reachable only from one space on the board. Players start in any one of five spaces in the Outer Region, depending on the character. Players move in the Outer and Middle Regions by a throw of a six-sided die; movement in the

Inner Region is a laborious and oftentimes deadly one space at a time. Each space on the board has an explanation written on it, e.g., "Woods—Draw 1 Card." When players land on a space in the Outer or Middle Regions they simply follow instructions (unless another player is there in which case they may choose to deal with the other player and ignore the instructions on the space). In the Inner Regions players must deal with each space, except for two spots, the Plain of Peril and the Valley of Fire. Movement may go in either direction, the only limit is that a player may not backtrack during a single move. Moving from the Outer Region to the Middle Region is accomplished by confronting the Sentinel of the Middle Region (and he's a toughie!) or by getting hold of a raft and crossing the Storm River which borders the entire Middle Region. Rafts are not easy to come by and must be used immediately (at which point they are discarded) so some planning is necessary to avoid the Sentinel. Moving from the Middle Region to the Inner Region is accomplished by opening the Portal of Power, a hazardous task that may be done by Strength or Craft. Each Region is a bit more difficult than the other, however it is common for players to move back and forth between the Outer and Middle Regions as need or incident dictates. The Inner Region is generally an all or nothing affair, though one can retreat from it if things start going awry. Entrance into the Inner Region is a clear indication of a player going for a win and competing players will need to start making plans to counter the effort.

Most spaces on the board call for a draw of cards, these are known as Adventure Cards and there's a whopping 104 of them. Along with the many different characters, it is these cards which make for the wide variation from game to game. Adventure Cards can be Events, Physical Enemies, Spiritual Enemies, Strangers, Objects, Magic Objects, Followers, or Places. Enemies must always be fought by whatever type of combat is appropriate. In the case of Physical Enemies, a Strength is given on the card to which a die is added. The player gets his or her Strength, a die, and any Objects that might aid in the combat, e.g., a Sword. If the Enemy wins the player loses a

Life (though certain Objects such as Shields may prevent this). If the player wins the Enemy is killed and kept by the player who may "cash in" Enemies for Strength Points (seven Strength Points of Enemies will get a player one extra Strength). Ties are simply a stand-off and the turn ends. Psychic Combat is used instead of Strength, Spiritual Enemies may not be cashed in, and nothing can prevent the loss of a Life if the player loses. All other types of Adventure Cards are self-explanatory, the player simply follows instructions. Each card drawn must be dealt with and for ease the cards are numbered, the numbers indicating in which order the cards are dealt with (e.g., Events are always dealt with first, Places last). A wide variety of things can take place due to Adventure Cards, some good, some bad.

Outside of Adventure Cards, *Talisman* also provides Purchase Cards—representing various objects plays may buy in the Village in the Outer Region such as helmets, axes, etc., Change of Alignment Cards—placed on the character's playing piece to show a change of Alignment, Talisman Cards—presented to the player when he receives a Talisman through one means or another, Spell Cards—detailing the various Spells a Player with sufficient Craft may use, and the dread Toad Cards—these replace a character's piece when he or she becomes a Toad, arguably the worst thing that can happen to your character in the course of a game (however, it is highly humorous for the other players). A word about Spells, they are not easy to come by and each player capable of using them can have at most three (unless he or she has possession of the Magic Wand). They can be very powerful however, turning the tide at the most opportune moments.

Physically *Talisman* is an extremely handsome game in all aspects. The board is gorgeous and very sturdy. My only complaint with it is that the instructions in one corner are obscured by the folded-over backing, a glitch I'm certain I was just unlucky enough to get in my set. Oh well, someday I'll find out what a die roll of 6 does in the Tavern, so far nobody's rolled it. The playing pieces are wonderful

as are the Character Cards, very nice fantastic artwork, rendered with puckish good humor. My set is the first edition, so the Adventure Cards and other cards are in black & white, however the second edition has full-color cards throughout and they are pretty.

The rules of *Talisman* are not

only simple, they are cross-referenced for ease. This is a benefit that is not even particularly necessary, the rules are so well done, you won't need to do much checking of them. Indeed *Talisman* is a game that you can sit down and play comfortably in a few moments, with very cursory

reading. The game is more fun with more people and I see no reason why the six-player limit could not be extended if you have some kind of extra bases for the character pieces.

Ease of play, lots of replayability, great fun win or lose, these are the hallmarks of a good beer

& pretzels game and *Talisman* scores high in all three. If this were not enough, Games Workshop has recently put out an expansion set that provides 14 new characters, along with some new Spells and Adventure Cards, that add even more fun to the game. Need I say more? □



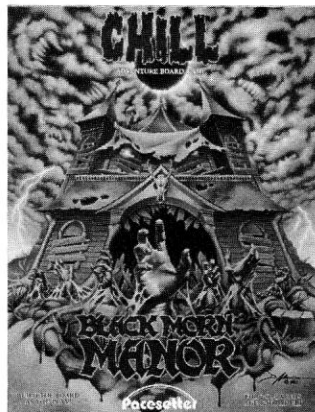
## Chill Adventure Board Game BLACK MORN MANOR

By Troy Denning  
(Pacesetter \$15)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

*Black Morn Manor* is an adventure boardgame published by Pacesetter, the same nice folk who gave you the *Chill* role-playing game. Like its "daddy," *Black Morn Manor* deals with investigators of the occult in close confrontation with some evil creature, in this case any one of the ten monstrous "Masters" occupying the environs of the Manor. One player is the "Minion" of this Master, the others are "Envoys" dedicated to the Master's destruction, destruction carried out by discovering who the Master is and what item will allow the Envoys to battle him. The Minion player's task is to get this same item and carry it out of the Manor. Things are complicated by the fact that when the game begins, only the Minion knows who the Master is and which item will destroy him. In addition, throughout the course of the game, it is possible—indeed it's more than probable—for Envoys to become Minions or vice versa, thus changing their former victory goals.

Play of *Black Morn Manor* begins thusly: Each player chooses one of the six character cards available (these cards depict characters from the *Chill* rules), then a ten-sided die is rolled. Lowest roller becomes the Minion, all others are Envoys. Each Envoy takes six Willpower chips and places them with his or her card. Willpower determines the strength of Envoy in combat, Minions have no Willpower (logical, right?). The Minion then chooses the Master by drawing randomly from the ten Master cards. Masters are creatures like Werewolf, Vampire, Zombie Master, etc., and each has its own specific combination of cards. Cards are numbered and their numbers correspond to listings on the Master cards. The Minion player goes through the deck and pulls out the cards listed, setting the others aside, thus forming the deck for that game. Each player then draws three board "tiles"



(these tiles are used to construct the board for that game, as will be explained shortly) and places them face up in front of him. The Minion deals four cards to each player, Envoys put their tokens on the Gate of the Manor, the Minion places his in the crypt and play begins. Turn sequence is: card play, tile play, movement, combat, card play. I'll cover each but first let me explain about *Black Morn Manor*'s board.

The "board" depicting *Black Morn Manor* is actually a set of 48 separate tiles, placed two at a time by the players during their turns. Tiles are of two types: "grounds" tiles which depict areas like lawns, gardens, orchards, etc., and "manor" tiles which show the twelve rooms of the house proper. Each tile is imprinted with a number from 1 to 9 and these numbers both regulate movement and add to a Minion's total in combat. The framework of the board is created by placing the Gate tile at one end and the Crypt tile diagonally opposite it in the right-hand corner. This creates a seven-tile by seven-tile grid. Subsequent tiles are placed at the discretion of the players, with these general restrictions: tiles must be within the board area and must touch at least one other tile. There are more specific restrictions on Manor tiles and "sets" of ground tiles and I suggest you pay careful attention to them in your first few games. It is very easy to misplace a tile and not realize it until later in the game, creating major problems. Now that you understand the unique nature of the board, let's examine how it works in movement.

In *Black Morn Manor* each

player can move his token up to three tiles on the board in this manner: The token is moved to a tile. If it's an Envoy's token the player must roll the tile number or higher on a ten-sided die. If successful he draws a Willpower chip and adds it to his total Willpower. He may then move to another tile and follow the same procedure up to the maximum of three tiles. If not successful, the player draws a card from the deck, follows any pertinent instructions and ends his move. Minions move in the same way except they must roll the tile number or lower to succeed. If they do, they draw a card and can continue moving. If not, they must end their move. As should be obvious, Envoys move faster over low-numbered tiles, while Minions move faster over high-numbered tiles. This gives the Minion an edge in the Manor proper, where tiles have higher numbers and gives Envoys the edge on the grounds where the numbers tend to be lower. Got it? Good, let's move onto the cards.

Card play in *Black Morn Manor* is the second key element in the game. Outside of the Master card, drawn at the opening of the game, cards are of four types: Item, Envoy, Minion, and Evil Way. Item cards depict the various items in the game like wooden stake, scroll, revolver, etc. Each card shows which Master the item affects, how an Envoy uses it against him, and any combat bonus the item gives. Players may hold only one item at a time, if another card is drawn, they may drop one of the two items on the tile they are on, where it may be picked up later by any player landing there (expect the board to be liberally littered with items near the endgame).

Envoy cards are playable only by an Envoy and can have good or bad effects. Bad effects go to the player who drew the card, good effects can be played on any Envoy, including the drawer of the card.

Minion cards are playable only by Minions and either provide ammo against the Envoys or sometimes turn them into Envoys (via a Cure card).

Evil Way cards are terrible spells and nasties that do awful things to Envoys. Envoys must play

them on themselves, Minions can play them on any Envoy.

Unlike most games, cards are not replenished when used or discarded, the only way to get a card is via movement or by play of another card. In addition to their use as the basic tools of the game, the cards can also provide clues as to who a Master is (e.g., if a Zombies card shows up, the Master is not the Werewolf because he can't control Zombies). This is a nice touch, but you'll have to play the game several times with several different Masters to decide which cards are clues to which Masters. All the cards are self-explanatory but some of the explanations are vague, giving rise to rules arguments. A little reasonable negotiation can usually clear up the problem to everyone's satisfaction, but be ready for a few headaches. That warning aside, let's examine combat.

Combat occurs when players end their move on the same tile, or when a card "attacks" an Envoy. Outside of the card attacks, combat is always optional. Minions may attack other Minions or Envoys. Envoys can only attack Minions. In combat Envoys add their total number of Willpower chips and any combat bonus for an item to a die roll. Minions add the number of the tile they are on and any combat bonus for an item to a die roll. The winner is the high scorer, ties are rerolled. The winner may then take an item from the loser or a tile from the loser's hand and also move the loser up to three tiles in any direction. In addition, an Envoy losing a combat to a Minion loses two Willpower chips. Should an Envoy ever be brought down to zero Willpower, he or she immediately becomes a Minion. Finally Envoys can pool their Willpower if they occupy the same tile, but if they lose they all suffer the effects from the loss. This rule makes it possible for the Envoys to defeat the Masters, all of whom have vast combat scores (the lowest is 17, usually a lot more Willpower than a single Envoy can muster in a game).

*Black Morn Manor* has a lot going for it in terms of design. The constantly changing board and card decks ensure that the game remains fresh for a long time. The rules are very, very

simple and can be learned quickly, though vague in spots, creating minor problems the first few times out. The worst part of the game is the deck set-up, the Minion creating the card deck must be very careful to get the right cards, a task made more difficult by the fact that the numbers repeat for the different types of cards and are not consecutive from type to type. A suggestion is for the game owner to arrange the cards numerically before play, it makes things quicker. Be warned also that there

are two 33s in the Envoy cards (I assume this is an error, what do you say Pacemaker?).

Graphically I was not terribly impressed with *Black Morn Manor*. Most of the elements of the cards are drawn from *Chill* and range from cartoony to downright bland. The board tiles also could have been a lot moodier than they are. On the plus side, cards and tiles are fairly sturdy.

Another point to be aware of is the victory conditions, i.e., if any Envoy wins, all Envoys win, if a

Minion wins, he or she wins alone. This suggests that Envoys should always work together, a fact stated in the strategy hints at the end of the rules. On the other hand, gamers are used to competitive play in boardgames and unless warned beforehand, Envoy players may well ignore this fact. I suggest making it very clear to new players that it is almost impossible for a single Envoy to win alone, not only is this quite true, understanding of it makes for a better-played game.

A final caution, the frequent

changing of players from Envoy to Minion and vice versa can make for seemingly odd situations. It is very possible to wind up with all Envoys or all Minions, but don't despair, such situations usually reverse themselves before long.

In summation *Black Morn Manor* is a nifty fast-moving game, nice for a quick evening's entertainment. Its horror milieu might not be to every gamer's taste, and its unusual strategies may take a few games to master, but if you do enjoy a chill or two I think it's worth the effort. □



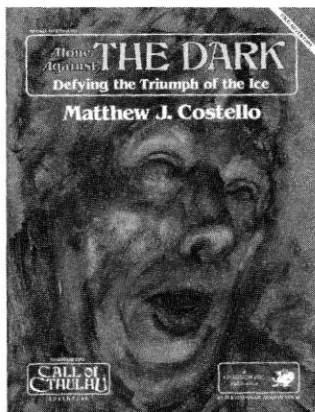
## A Call Of Cthulhu Adventure ALONE AGAINST THE DARK

By Matthew J. Costello  
(Chaosium \$10)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

One problem I've had as a *Call Of Cthulhu* aficionado is that, except when I attend large game conventions, I rarely get to play the game—I usually act as the Keeper. Well, Chaosium has remedied that situation for all of us type-cast Keepers with its recent line of solo *Call Of Cthulhu* adventures. *Alone Against the Dark* is the second in this series and is, so far, the best of an excellent set. It is designed by Matthew J. Costello, who is making a name for himself as one of the top designers of solo adventures in the industry. This is his second for *Cthulhu* (the first was a solo insert in the short-lived *Fantasy Gamer*), and if he hasn't yet perfected the genre, he's come very close with *The Dark*.

It wouldn't be fair to those who have yet to play this most challenging adventure to reveal too much about the plot, although the book's subtitle "Defying the Triumph of the Ice" and the map of Antarctica in the back are sure tip-offs to anyone familiar at all with Lovecraft's works that the Antarctic Old Ones will be involved in some way. (As is one of the lesser-known Great Old Ones, although its identity and purposes will have to be learned as one progresses through the many adventures that await *The Dark*'s single intrepid investigator.) The adventure starts out ordinarily enough. A colleague and friend of the investigator, T. Gliere, has ended up in jail in Athens charged with stealing an archaeological treasure from the museum there. Gliere has wired the investigator for help. Accepting the plea from Gliere will lead the player on a trail that not only includes Athens, but Cairo, Germany and Antarctica as well.



Players are provided with a semi-completed investigator with which to start the adventure—Professor Louis Grunewald of Miskatonic University in Arkham. In fact, a total of four investigators are provided in the scenario—this solo adventure is potentially deadly enough that players may easily run through all of them before saving the world from the plots of the Old Ones. Other investigators provided are wealthy financier Ernest Hold; Nora McShane, ace reporter for the *New York Daily Sun*; and U.S. Navy Lt. Devon Wilson (McShane's boyfriend). Each investigator is known to the other, and each in turn is assumed to be in contact with the next and keeping a journal of what is happening, so that if one is lost, the player can activate the next and continue on with the adventure, rather than having to start all over again. (A very good idea.) While it's entirely possible to play other investigators—particularly those of your own invention—these four have the best chance of uncovering the sinister plot behind Griere's incarceration and surviving (most of) the scenario. And if they don't, you can always bring your own characters in to finish up for them.

As noted, the investigators provided in the book are only partially completed. Players are given a pool of skill points to be allotted as desired to each investi-

gator's skills, plus an additional 150 points to be divided among certain specialty skills each character possesses (for Grunewald these are mostly science skills, such as Archaeology, Astronomy, and History; for McShane, English, Photography, Law, and so on). Part of the challenge in play involves assigning sufficient skill points to those skills of most use to each character in his quest. Of course, after you've played the adventure for a while, you'll pick up on which skills are used most often to gain necessary information or to protect your investigator from mayhem or insanity. For example, Grunewald will be doing most of the initial research, so his skills in the sciences (particularly the social sciences) will prove vital for him. However, he can't be a totally defenseless, mental-over-physically skilled individual, or you will be extremely lucky if he survives past Athens. Coming up with just the right blend of skill points, especially at the beginning, can be a real test of one's experience in the game.

Mr. Costello provides players with some good tips in his introduction, as well as with the information vital to running the scenario—so don't skim over this, even if you are a veteran of solo adventures from other game systems. He also describes five new skills for use in this scenario, which can prove quite helpful in regular *Cthulhu* adventures, too, if the Keeper chooses to incorporate them into the game. These include Egyptology, Cryptography, and Survival (which could really have come in handy in some games I've run). The introduction also describes the format of the adventure, which is set up in the familiar numbered-paragraph form of most solo adventures. However, there are some additional innovations that make *The Dark* stand out as "state of the art" in solo designs. A minor but most helpful addition is the inclusion at the bottom of each paragraph of all the paragraph numbers from which the

entry can be reached. Also featured in the previous *Cthulhu* solo, *Alone Against the Wendigo*, this device is quite handy for those of us who tend to get so engrossed in the adventure that we forget to write down the numbers of the places we've been to and quickly get hopelessly lost.

*The Dark* also makes good use of the location table—a chart listing all the locations in a certain city or areas, such as Arkham or New York City, that can be reached from any other location on that particular chart. So if one wants to go from the *Arkham Advertiser* newspaper offices to Miskatonic University, instead of having to follow a series of paragraphs from one place to the other, one simply finds the paragraph number of the next location and goes directly there, saving a lot of time and frustration. Some locations are even accessible by telephone, saving a trip and the time it takes to get there—though not as much information can be obtained this way. Since the investigators are, unknown to them, running against a sinister deadline—and also must meet train, boat, and plane schedules to get from one city or country to another—such a time-saving device is a welcome way to obtain additional information more quickly.

Additionally, the scenario includes a daily calendar, broken down into hours, to help the player keep track of time and activities during the adventure. Other perks add to the overall fun of the game, such as a pyramid map that must be cut out and laid down piece by piece as you progress (to keep that's up ahead secret even to the player), and a shipboard activities table to keep your investigator busy during the nine-day voyage to Athens.

In fact, I find little to complain about at all in this scenario book. I'm not overly impressed with the illustrations by Krawczyk (only name given). The cover illo is fine, but the interior ones look too... I guess "sketchy" is the term I'm

seeking, like they were reproduced from pencil sketches. I must admit, however, that they do convey an atmosphere of encroaching horror, which goes a lot to make up for my negative reaction to the style. I found a couple of places where the layout was faulty—paragraphs that start in the right-hand column above a page-wide picture continuing in

the bottom left-hand column, then concluding in the bottom right (first one I encountered had me thinking something had been left out until I spotted the continuity picking up in the other column). And there is, of course, the problem inherent in all solos of knowing what is to come in a paragraph you've already been to, whether you make the necessary

rolls or not. (Though in several places, if you've been at one place already, it'll refer you to another—a nice touch.)

If *Alone Against the Dark* is any indication of what is to come in the way of solo *Call Of Cthulhu* scenarios from Chaosium, I'll be anxiously awaiting the next one—even while I'm attempting to save the world from Costello's fiendish

twists in *The Dark*. Pick this one up at all costs—unless you absolutely hate solos, or don't play *Cthulhu*. And if you manage to complete it with fewer than the four investigators provided, give yourself a pat on the back—or whatever piece of anatomy is left on your investigator after the Old Ones and their minions finish with him. □



## Traveller Adventure 6 EXPEDITION TO ZHODANE

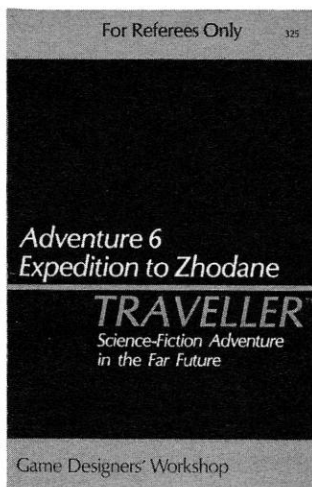
By Marc W. Miller (GDW \$6)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

This booklet is the sixth of GDW's line of adventures for *Traveller*, and it appears that the people at that company have produced a product that showcases their considerable creativity and imagination.

The story begins on Utoland of the Jewell subsector in the Spinward Marches. The travellers (either characters from a continuing campaign or the eight pre-generated personnel provided) are seeking employment and consult the help wanted ads of the *Utoland Gazette*. There, a number of jobs are offered from cook or machinist to customs inspector or miner. Information is provided about each job, giving some useful insight into the deals of the more mundane forms of employment in the Imperium (after all, not everyone can be an adventurer!). The want-ad approach is not only an interesting lead-in to the adventure, but a nice source of background information.

Eventually the travellers will find themselves as miners in the asteroid belt, working under conditions that are something short of ideal. It is while working in the asteroid belt of the system that the adventurers will encounter *The Rock*, a 300-ton starship fashioned out of an asteroid. Deck plans and details for the ship and its 25-ton boat, *Pebble*, give all the necessary information for administering activity on board. *The Rock's* occupant is Lisan Rashani Riket, a twelve-year-old girl in cold sleep in one of the ship's staterooms. She is the daughter of Professor Charles Rashani Riket, who, while studying the effects of psionics on government and society on the planet Zeycude in the Zhodani Consulate, has disappeared. The course of the adventure is that the players should go with Lisan into Zhodani space—hence the adventure's title—to rescue her father. (It can't be said that the people at



GDW are not ignorant of the elements of space opera.) Perhaps the only weak link in the chain of events is the incentive for the players to do so, as there is no compelling reason for the party to undertake such an arduous journey. The psionic Zhodani are no friends of the Imperium under

normal circumstances, and it is suggested that this game be played against the backdrop of the Fifth Frontier War. A listing of possible ship encounters for each system that *The Rock* may visit on its trip is given, complete with *High Guard* stats; those same rules can be used to manage any combat that might ensue between the small asteroid craft and Zhodani patrol ships.

*Expedition To Zhodane* has some interesting features. One is the personality overlay machine aboard *The Rock* that the Professor uses to penetrate Zhodani society for his studies. (The device seems very similar to a machine of the same name used in Jack C. Haldeman's novel, *All My Sins Remembered*.) Use of personality overlays allow the assumption of alternative personalities by means of drugs, hypnosis, and sleep tapes. As should be obvious, this is just the sort of thing necessary to penetrate Zhodani society, whose psionic nature would render more superficial

attempts at subterfuge, such as forged passports or disguise, useless. Procedures for employing the overlay device and five pre-developed personalities are provided. The personality overlay machine is vital to the adventure at hand and offers some interesting prospects for future use.

*Expedition To Zhodane* deals quite a bit with the Zhodani, and because of this, the four pages of background material the booklet contains are essential. Therein are brief summations of Zhodani society, history, government, and methods of character generation. This will give the gamemaster needed insight into managing the adventure, and makes for some interesting reading.

In summation, I would recommend this booklet to the *Traveller* gamemaster who is looking for a long, fairly complex, adventure to administer over a couple of playing sessions. As usual with GDW products, this is well thought out and interesting. □



## For Use With Doctor Who THE IYTEAN MENACE

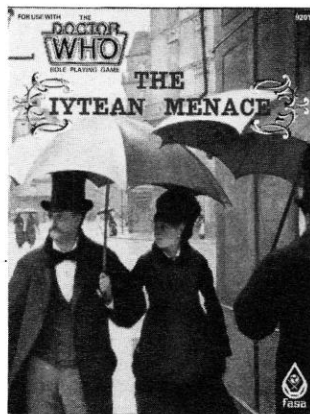
By J. Andrew Keith  
(FASA, \$7)

## THE LORDS OF DESTINY

By William H. Keith, Jr.  
(FASA, \$7)

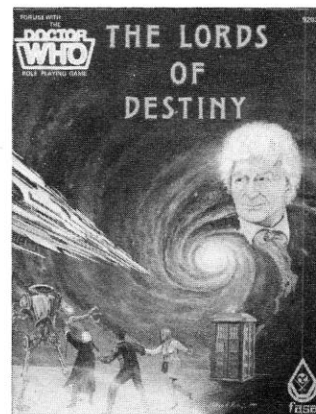
Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

In the 22 seasons of *Doctor Who* that have so far been made in England, the stories can be sorted into a number of different categories, from the historical stories to the monster stories to the stories featuring the classic villains like the Master, the Daleks, or the Cybermen (and of course the same story might fall into more than one category). These first two modules written for the *Doctor Who Role Playing Game* can easily be put into categories as well. *The Iytean Menace* is a monster story set in Victorian London and *The Lords Of Destiny* is about an alien civiliza-



tion (with two factions) that inadvertently menaces the entire galaxy. Longtime fans of the series will agree that these concepts are nothing that the series hasn't shown more than once; only the details vary from other stories (of course, this is not necessarily bad, since really original ideas are extremely rare).

Both modules provide certain scenes that bring the players into the midst of the action and then a series of suggestions on what to do in different eventualities and



listing a number of possible endings that might be attempted by the players (including a few decidedly un-Doctorish ones just in case). This certainly makes a lot more sense than the more common type of scenarios in some systems where the players practically have to do things just the way the designer expects them to or the unprepared gamemaster is totally lost. There are even suggestions for how the enterprising gamemaster could expand the scenario or develop a



sequel to it.

Unfortunately, *The Iytean Menace* fails in one important aspect of making the scenario easy to adapt for any campaign. It assumes that the players are voluntarily working for the Celestial Intervention Agency, so that the CIA can send them into the situation provided with certain knowledge of the problem before they get into it at all. This means that if the players are running the Doctor and his companions (or another Time Lord or Lady going solo like him), it is very hard to get them into the scenario. Although the game was set up so

that the players would be CIA agents, this is definitely not required. In fact, in the odd event that only two or three people (including the gamemaster) are interested in the game, playing one of the regenerations of the Doctor (and a companion if necessary) is probably the best way to play this game. A clever gamemaster can get around this (I did) but the writer should have at least made a passing suggestion on what the gamemaster should do, considering how many other options are covered.

There are game stats for all the major characters in the scenario as

well as some generic stats for minor characters with which the player might interact (like servants or soldiers) and an assortment of sample player-characters (including Joan of Arc in *Lords Of Destiny*) that can either be used in the scenario or simply as more examples of character creation for new players.

One problem with these scenarios is that neither has any maps of important locales in the scenario (although *The Iytean Menace* prints a map of London at the time). Obviously, not everything could be mapped if the flexibility is to be maintained, but

important locales like Colonel Fraser's house or the Audience Chamber could have been provided. Of course, the gamemaster could always provide his own maps, but even a simple floorplan of the World-ship of Ydar (or at least its Heart) in *Lords Of Destiny* would make this module more immediately usable.

Aside from this slight drawback, these modules are worth buying. A *Doctor Who* gamemaster, aside from getting a pretty good adventure either of these modules, can use these as examples of what a good *Doctor Who* adventure needs to succeed. □



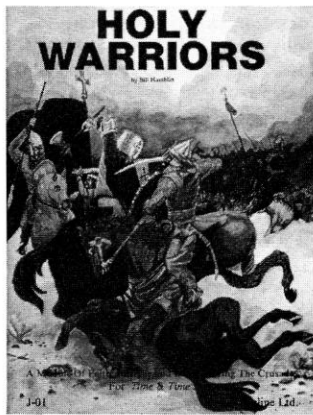
## Module for Time & Time Again HOLY WARRIORS

By William Hamblin  
(Timeline \$10)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

*Holy Warriors* is the first adventure supplement for Timeline's role-playing game of time travel and adventure, *Time & Time Again*. It provides gamemasters of *Time & Time Again* with an extensively researched sourcebook for background information on the period of the Crusades in the Middle East, as well as two scenarios for play in that era. Those who have seen William Hamblin's work in *Different Worlds* and elsewhere certainly won't be disappointed with his efforts here. *Holy Warriors* is excellent as a sourcebook for adventuring during the two-hundred-year period of the Crusades.

The Crusades lasted from the end of the 11th century to nearly the close of the 13th, yet Mr. Hamblin does an admirable job of covering the vital information a gamemaster would need to set adventures at just about any time during this period in the Middle East, where the Crusaders attempted to "free" the Holy Land of Palestine (the area known as the Levant) from Moslem domination. The supplement is 30 pages long (plus maps on the inside front and back covers), two-thirds of which consists of sourcebook material and the rest covering two scenarios, "Blades of the Assassins" and "Sea of Blood" (each of which contain additional background data on their topics). Six maps are provided in the book: four political maps showing the changes in the region from 1098 to 1145 to 1200 and 1245; a larger geographic map; and a map of the Red Sea for use with "Sea



of Blood." The book is illustrated throughout with woodcuts of the period appropriate to the subject matter. The cover illustration is bright and eye-catching, depicting a battle between armored cavalry, presumably Crusaders and Moslems—it isn't quite clear. Unfortunately the cover is the only disappointment I had about the book—it's a bit too cartoony for my taste, and looks as though it were originally drawn in crayon. And the colors at the bottom obscure much of the print there. Overall a minor complaint—and the greatest I can find with the supplement.

I was most impressed with *Holy Warriors'* extensive sourcebook section. Some might find it a bit too erudite, but I found it fascinating. I have to admit that the period of the Crusades was never one I personally studied to any great lengths, but those facts included herein by Mr. Hamblin that I checked against my *Britannica* and other sources all checked out completely; so any gamemaster who uses *Holy Warriors* as a source can be confident in its statements. And, of course, it is true that anyone who wishes can probably find everything Hamblin has discussed in *Holy Warriors*—and more—at a well-stocked local library if you've got the time and inclination to do so (better set aside several weeks' study at least,

though). Unless you're really a fanatic on the subject, you'd be better advised investing in the supplement. You may need to do a bit more study for really specific scenarios you might want to run if your players are sticklers to detail—but for most time-travel campaigns set in the period, this book and your imagination will be all you'll need.

Just to give you an idea of what all is covered in *Holy Warriors*, the sourcebook section is divided into eight chapters: Geography, History, Society, Economic Systems, Religion, Technology, Politics, and Warfare. Each chapter is further subdivided into more specific areas of each subject. For example, the chapter on Economic Systems covers the monetary systems of the time and place, including the Muslim, Frankish, and Byzantine coinage systems for play; civilian and military wages (in dinars per month); prices of typical products available on the market, including food, animals, and even slaves; and notes on agriculture, industry, and trade. The chapter on Religion describes briefly—but adequately for gaming purposes—the three great religions of the area: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, and their effects on the lives and cultures of the day. The chapter on Technology includes information on the sciences, medicine, and transportation of medieval Palestine, even providing tables with rates of travel for characters on foot, horseback, cart, or with armies, raiding parties, or caravans. And the chapter on Warfare describes the relative strengths, tactics, and equipment of the Crusader and Muslim armies likely to be encountered by time-tripping player-characters, should they wind up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I learned a lot just reading through the sourcebook section of *Holy Warriors*—things I'd forgotten or never knew about the

Middle East at the time of the Crusades. Unless you're already pretty well up on the topic, you will too. I know one thing for certain—I'd really hesitate to run any role-playing scenario set in this period, time travel or otherwise, without the *Holy Warriors* sourcebook next to me.

As for the scenarios, even though they are secondary in importance to the sourcebook section, "Blades of the Assassins" and "Sea of Blood" can prove highly useful to a *Time & Time Again* gamemaster as starting points for a Crusades time-travel campaign. As the mysterious and fanatic Assassins, led by their Shayk al-Jabal, have always captured by interest, this scenario was my favorite of the two. It is also the most developed. In it, a group of Voltigeurs (*Time & Time Again* term for its temporal agents, if you haven't seen the game itself yet) are assigned to spend a year or more in the Levant, starting in April of 1191, in order to infiltrate the Assassin cult in an effort to learn its secret occult doctrines. To assist them, they are accompanied by a professor of Islamic theology, Dr. Ali Dimashqi. Unless they blow it badly, the players will, during the course of the scenario, not only infiltrate and be initiated as Assassins, but will be asked to carry out an actual assassination! And their situation will be further complicated as Dr. Dimashqi falls under the charismatic charm of Sinan, the Old Man of the Mountain, and actually converts to the Assassins' doctrine.

While "Blades" is very detailed as far as rituals and initiations the characters must undergo and information they can learn about the Assassins, most of the possible action that can occur is only implied and will be up to the gamemaster to insert. Players who prefer scenarios that are all action may find "Blades" somewhat dull without such gamemaster inter-

vention; those who like to uncover hidden information on covert missions—with danger just a step away—should find it more than adequate.

"Sea of Blood," on the other hand, can offer a lot of action to players so inclined. It involves the time travelers with an ill-fated pirate expedition on the Red Sea in 1182-83, led by Reynald de Chatillon. Little is known historically of the details of this raid; de Chatillon's expedition ended in

failure—and death—when he attempted a raid on Mecca, the Holy City of Islam, and de Chatillon was beheaded at the hands of the leader of the Muslim Saracens, Saladin himself. The scenario describes de Chatillon and his crew, the Muslim forces that will be arrayed against him, and what little is known historically of his raids in the Red Sea. Beyond these guides, the gamemaster is free to improvise as much or as little as he likes,

providing the players with daring sea battles, attacks on caravans and desperate struggles against overwhelming Muslim armies—all of which they must defeat or avoid in order to reach the extraction point to return to their own time with a record of de Chatillon's voyage. (Of course, they could end up on the slave auction block instead, as a stepping stone for further adventure in the period, if the gamemaster is devious enough.) Character stats

for the gamemaster-characters in both "Blades" and "Sea" are found at the end of the book.

Overall I'd recommend *Holy Warriors* highly to any gamemaster who wants to run a time-travel or any other scenario or campaign set in the Middle East during the Crusades. Even those who don't play *Time & Time Again*—or any time-travel role-playing game—should find this a very useful package for adventuring during this period of history. □



## DC Heroes Module SIEGE

By Jerry Epperson and Craig Patterson (Mayfair, \$6)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Back in the days when the Justice League of America truly were the "World's Greatest Superheroes," they met in a satellite set in a geosynchronous orbit above the city of Metropolis. Whoever was on monitor duty there could alert the rest of the League whenever the world needed their help. However, the satellite also contains a lot of highly technological equipment that many a criminal would like to get his hands on. So one day, a gang of criminals comes up with a plan to place the satellite under "siege."

*Siege* is the first module for the *DC Heroes Role Playing Game* and features the old Justice League, prior to the destruction of their satellite and the formation of the new JLA shortly afterward. With minor modifications, it could possibly be made to work with the new Justice League (although their game stats are not provided), but it would still have to have happened before the recent "Crisis" mini-series. This means little to people not reading the comics that this game is based on, but the game assumes at least a certain familiarity with the comics so I assume that people interested in this module will know what I'm talking about.

This game gives the game stats for (pre-"Crisis") Red Tornado, as well as the Tornado Champion, the Tornado Tyrant, and the old Superman foe, the Parasite. It also gives stats for a new group of supervillains created just for this module. Although there are more than enough supervillains in the DC universe (since they've been publishing superhero comics for almost fifty years), there are good reasons in this case for using villains that the heroes will have never heard of before.

This module comes complete with detailed series of maps of the



JLA satellite, very useful if you're running a Justice League campaign set at some past period in their careers or if you're playing a campaign set on an alternate world where the satellite wasn't destroyed, but not at all useful if you're trying to play a campaign set in the present DC universe.

This brings up the main problem with this module. It is too tightly wedded to a period in the past of heroes involved. You could play it as a sort of a one-shot "casebook" adventure of the Justice League, but then you've got to be careful

that nothing significant happens to change the characters in ways that they hadn't been affected before. And in a game, this takes a lot of the fun out of it, and can lead to players who are frustrated and/or stumped attempting suicidal actions since they really can't die if history is to be preserved.

Only absolute completists or those with a pressing need for maps of the JLA satellite should pick up this module. As it is, I really think it's worth waiting until they put out a Justice League sourcebook like their recent *Batman* sourcebook. □

## FILMS

Continued from page 45

fantastic plots, the incredible coincidences and bizarre characters which made up the background of Cleveland OH are all there, all neatly arranged. Howard is still a master of Quack Fu, as he was in the comic, he still smokes cigars, he still stands up for the little guy, and he still gets himself into the most fantastic messes one could imagine. So, the question is, if Lucas and Universal did everything so perfectly, why did *Howard The Duck* bomb at the box office?

Good question. A real good question. No one seems to have the answer. Of course, it is early on in the film's release at present; things could change. But it does not seem likely. Those who don't like it are sharply divided. One critic said the film was not enough like the comic. Another blamed its lack of appeal on being too much like the comic. Still another mutton head said he hated it for being a blatant rip-off of *E.T.*, and for adding the human/duck attraction for the sake of selling tickets. We feel it our duty to inform this "professional" who was too lazy to read his press notes that *Howard The Duck* had already been cancelled as a comic before *E.T.* had even begun filming, and that the romance in the comics was ten times steamier than it was on the screen.



Which leads us back to that same good question: What went wrong? No one knows. Those who hate the film all hate it for the wrong reasons. Like the woman who saw it the night we did said, "It was horrible. Howard didn't try to talk with the Dark Overlord of the Universe; he didn't try to reason with him, or negotiate—he just got a weapon and went after him." Well, sorry ma'am, but as any experienced gamer can tell you, you don't try to reason with the Dark Overlord of the Universe. Honest.

Nor should one try and drag high consequence into a film obviously designed to be nothing more than entertain-

ing. *Howard The Duck* is not *Rambo* in feathers. There is no ideology being pressed to the fore here. The movie was meant to make a few wry observations about human behavior and to give everyone a few laughs and a good time. It did this in spades. Anyone who missed the point, who could look past the good-natured fun being had and see plots to twist our children or turn them into zoophilous little monsters had better slow down and take a vacation. *Howard The Duck* was only a comedy—a fast-moving, rollicking barnstorm of a comedy; nothing more, and nothing less. See it when you can. □

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## Tales of Old Pavis

### Featuring Griselda in

# "BAD EXAMPLE"

By Oliver Dickinson

Illustrated by  
Walter Moore

A GUY like me whose favourite occupation is hanging around comes across unusual situations now and then, but one thing I never expect to see is a swell doll from one of the Rich Hill families poke her nose into Loud Lilina's. Moreover, although this doll is all dressed up in the latest style she seems scarcely old enough to be let out on her own, and in fact she is not, for with her comes an older doll who is not so well dressed and who must be her maid or companion or some such. Well, the young doll stands there looking around as if she never sees anything like this before, and the chances are she does not, at that, and we are so surprised to see such a doll in Lilina's that the conversation, which is never too brisk at that time of the morning anyway, dies to nothing and we all hear her ask Lilina if this is the right place to meet the renowned Griselda.

Lilina allows that Griselda may drop by at any moment and asks if the ladies will take anything while they wait. The young doll calls for a little wine, but her companion says no in such a tone as makes it clear that she has no wish to be there. In fact, she is acting most disgusted with the whole situation, and when Lilina shows them to the best seats she has to offer you can practically hear her making most uncomplimentary comments, although all she does is sniff. But the young doll seems to be getting a great bang out of everything, and I hear her say to the other, "Oh, Hilda, is this not exciting?" and when Hilda replies sternly that she prefers her excitement in cleaner surroundings, the young doll just laughs and says she has no soul.

They sit there awhile, and Sweet-Talking Shamus, who never passes up a chance to get in with rich dolls, tries to talk to them, but is frozen out most efficiently by Hilda, and anyone can see she knows what time it is. In fact, not long after this she suggests they

return home, but the young doll is most insistent that they wait for Griselda, and says besides that she is finding it most exciting, and romantic, and so forth. It is plain from her comments that she believes us all to be famous adventurers and hard cases and such, and furthermore that she has great admiration for such characters, and clearly she had a bad case of whatever it is that afflicts young characters from legitimate backgrounds now and then, and leads them to suppose that breaking the law or chasing rainbows in the Rubble are occupations worthy of much respect, and to make heroes of those who do such things. This Hilda doll is evidently meant to keep her on the straight and narrow, and points out to her that such persons are anti-social, and that if we are a typical sample it is not a paying proposition, and while this can be seen as somewhat insulting to us there is no doubt that she is right, though the young doll, whose name proves to be Viridia, takes no notice.



Just as Hilda is saying that they really ought to go, in comes Griselda, and Viridia bounces up to her at once.

"I am Viridia Patroma and it will be great privilege to buy you a drink. I hear so much about you and am full of admiration."

Now Griselda is such a doll as always has the dough to buy her own drinks but never refuses a free one, so she sits down with them and before long is getting her ear chewed off with talk by Viridia, so that she barely has a chance to say yes or no. Viridia has much to say on how exciting it must be to go adventuring, and how life in her part of Pavis is really very dull, and I think to myself that I can stand a little dullness if I get to live in the style that she is accustomed to on Rich Hill, and from the way Hilda gives a little smile and shakes her head I judge she thinks so too. Then Viridia starts in to ask Griselda about her career, and it seems to me that Hilda starts taking more notice of the conversation, but before very long she states firmly that they really must go, or Viridia's father will have the watch out combing Pavis for them, and this is very true, for the Patroma family carry a lot of weight in Pavis. But Viridia is plainly eager for more, and asks Griselda if they can meet again, and to my surprise Griselda says yes, and they fix on three days from then. I am surprised because ordinarily Griselda has no patience with hero-worshippers, though this is the first female one she encounters, to my knowledge.

But when they are gone she gestures to me to come over.

"I want you with me when they show up again, and see if you can round up Hanufa too. This Viridia will drive me crazy if I am stuck with her for too long, so you are to distract her with your tales, and Hanufa too, for she is much better at lying about her experiences than I am and can talk the ears off a troll anyway."

"Well, Griselda," I say, "of course, I will do what I can, but I do not see why you are willing to see this Viridia again if she is apt to drive you crazy."

"I have my reasons," says Griselda shortly, and I leave the matter there, for Griselda does not like being questioned about what she considers her business.

So when Viridia shows up in three days' time, still with Hilda riding herd on her, there we all are, and Griselda

introduces us, and before long a fine time is being had by one and all except Hilda, who sits on the edge looking proper, for though Hanufa and I have no real wish to speak to Viridia we have nothing else to do and besides, we seldom get a chance to taste stuff of the quality that she is paying for. By and by Griselda withdraws from the conversation, more or less, and I perceive she is trying to get talking to Hilda, and finally they are chatting quietly. But Hilda does not forget her responsibilities, and reminds Viridia when it is time to go, but she does not protest when Viridia makes another date, and though by this time I am feeling all tuckered-out trying to answer a thousand questions from Viridia, who is really surprisingly ignorant about life in general, and I will be happy if I never speak to her again, Griselda agrees and includes us all in the party, and of course Hanufa and I know better than to say no to Griselda.

Three days on, there they are again, and this time Griselda does not have much to say to Viridia but seems to wish to converse with Hilda, who also seems to wish this. It is not too long before Viridia gets restless about this, and finally she leans across to Griselda.

"Surely if you can speak to Hilda you can speak to me. Will you not tell a story of your exploits? I wish to hear one from your own lips."

She speaks in such a way as makes it clear that she is used to getting whatever she wants and thinks Griselda is bound to do as she wishes. Surprisingly, Griselda does not seem to resent this, but starts telling a story I never hear from her before.

It is all about how she gets cut off from a bunch while investigating some caves, and wanders here and there, escaping one peril after another, until she disturbs a family of cave trolls who start chasing her. She tries everything she knows to throw them off, but they keep on, and finally she takes a wrong turning and winds up against a blank wall, with no place to hide and all these trolls coming at her. She tells the story well, so that the whole joint winds up listening, and by this point she has Viridia on the edge of her seat, eyes and mouth wide open. She stops to take a pull at her drink.

Viridia is so excited she bursts out, "Whatever do you do?"

Griselda smiles sweetly, and spreads her hands.

"What can I do? They eat me."

Well, this is one of the oldest gags in the book, and most of us are expecting it by now, and the whole joint cracks up, and I notice that Hilda is one of those who is laughing hardest. Viridia goes all red and jumps up, looking very mad, and she opens her mouth to let loose, but she catches Griselda's eye, for Griselda is not laughing but looking at her calmly, and she must get the idea that it will be unwise to say whatever she has in mind, even if she is Viridia Patroma.

So she just snaps, "Come, Hilda," and marches off.

Hilda gets to her feet, wiping her eyes, and I hear her tell Griselda thanks for the best laugh she has in years, and also I hear Griselda say to her quite low, "Don't forget what I am telling you, now."

Hilda's face goes all serious and she nods just a little, and then she hurries after Viridia, who starts bawling her out when they are barely out of the door. It is plain that she will not be back, and this is surely a relief to most of us, for Lilina's will be nice and quiet in the mornings again.

Now a day or two later Griselda is taking her ease in Lilina's when in comes a whole bunch of the watch, headed up by Constable Jorjar himself. He asks Griselda most sternly if she knows anything of the whereabouts of one Hilda, dependant of the Patroma family.

"Why, no," says Griselda, "How will I? I barely know her, only that she comes in here a few times with Viridia Patroma. What's the beef?"

"Never mind that," says Constable Jorjar. "I guess we will have to search the place and ask you unsavoury characters a few questions, and you, Griselda, are going to come with me; I wish to look your place over."

So off Griselda has to go, while the watch go through Lilina's and ask us questions, but of course they find nothing and we can say no more than Griselda does, and they loosen up enough to tell us that Hilda disappears, and so does Viridia Patroma's jewelry box, and it is suspected that these events are connected. In a while Griselda is back, looking none the worse, but she shakes her head to all questions and will not be drawn to speculate, so we have to drop the matter. But I notice that she is in an unusually good mood for the rest of the

day, buying drinks and swapping gags and generally seeming very relaxed, and maybe she imbibes a little too freely. For eventually she takes me aside.

"You are involved in this somewhat, and while I suspect you hear what I say to Hilda when we part you keep your lips buttoned like a sensible guy, so I owe you one, and besides, I will burst if I do not tell someone, though this must go no further."

Naturally I am greatly intrigued and swear to keep it an absolute secret, so you do not hear this from me. She takes me outside and well away from Lilina's, and finally as we are walking along she tells me.

"That Hilda has plenty of moxie all right, and brains too, and I judge she will make a go of it in the adventuring dodge, now she has a stake. I spot that she is dissatisfied with her present situation, running around keeping that little cat out of trouble and taking all kinds of crap from her, no doubt, so I get to talking to her about what a doll can do, and maybe I drop a few hints about the most reliable fences in this town, and mention the name of a friend or two of mine who can be trusted, though I will swear that I never suggest to her that she lifts this Viridia's jewelry or anything else, and of course I do nothing so foolish as to offer her a hideout, though I am sure she will know where to go from one or two things I let drop."

"That is very interesting, Griselda," I say. "Does she give you anything for your trouble?"

"Do you think I am dumb?" says Griselda. "Dolls like Viridia know their jewelry boxes inside out, and if I am caught with anything recognizable it will not look good for me. No, I take nothing from Hilda, in fact I am happy to give her a hand, for I have great sympathy for dolls with ability who are stuck in such situations. Besides, I make a little on the deal, apart from the free drinks."

"How is that?" I say.

"Oh, easy enough," she says. "I make a few enquiries, and discover that old man Patroma will pay well to get his daughter cured of her infatuation with adventuring. It seems I do the trick all right, for he pays off yesterday and is happy to okay me with Constable Jorjar, he is so relieved; for at first he is afraid I will set his daughter a bad example." □

## NEW GAMES

Continued from page 43

the yakuza, the Tongs, and the ninja. Also contains conversions for *Champions* and *Superworld*.

**Super-Crooks & Criminals** (FGU, 24pp + counters, \$6) by Ken Cliffe. Eighteen independent supervillains and three groups with twelve more supervillains.

**The Great Iridium Con** (FGU, 23pp + counters, \$6) by Stephen Dedman. Introductory scenario for 4-7 players. The adventure involves a science-fiction convention, hi-tech companies, and an alien spaceship.

### FOR ANY SYSTEM

**Cities: Urban Aid for Fantasy Roleplaying** (Chaosium, 64pp, \$9) by Stephen Abrams and Jon Everson. "Create and Explore Your Own Fantasy Communities." Third and expanded edition of a supplement originally published by Midkemia.

**Lorien & the Halls of the Elven Smiths** (ICE, 64pp + maps, \$12) by Terry Kevin Amthor. "Explore Citadels, Manors, Ruins, and of course the Halls of the Jewel Smiths, each an ideal adventure site laden with traps and treasure. . . Learn about the lore and nature of Elves, with the extensive material on the noble Noldor, proud Sindar, and mystical Silvan lines. . ."

### WARGAMES

**Aegean Strike: Land, Air and Sea Combat in the Eastern Mediterranean** (Victory, boxed, \$20) by Mark Herman. Includes four scenarios plus a bonus link-up scenario with *Gulf Strike*, on whose system this game is based. Contains a 56-page rulebook, a 32"x22" map, 520 counters, a 16-page charts & tables book, playaids, a 10-sided die, and a counter tray.

**Quebec 1759** (Columbia, boxed, \$25) by Tom Dalgliesh, et al. A two-player strategic game depicting the historic campaign and battle between the French and the British forces for control of North America. Comes with an 8-page rulebook, a 32"x11" map, 50 hardwood counters, and four dice. Playable within one hour.

**War Of 1812** (Columbia, boxed, \$25) by Tom Dalgliesh. A two-player strategic game simulating the roles of the militia and the Indians, the problems of supply in winter, and the dramatic naval battles to gain control of the Great Lakes. Comes with an 8-page rulebook, a 32"x11" map, 50 hardwood counters, and four dice. Playable within two hours.

**Rommel in the Desert** (Columbia, boxed, \$30) by Craig Besinque.

Based on the World War II North African campaign. Seven scenarios for two players: "The 1940 Campaign," "The 1941 Campaign," "Crusader," "The 1942 Campaign," "Gazala," "The Hard Summer," and "The 1941/42 Campaign." Comes with a 32-page rules booklet, a 36"x11" map, 100 hardwood counters, four dice, and 42 supply cards.

**Federation And Empire** (Task Force, boxed, \$39.95) by Stephen V. Cole and the Amarillo Design Bureau. A strategic companion game to *Star Fleet Battles* for 2-8 players. The game features economics, repair, production, capturing ships, tugs, mobile bases, five scenarios, etc. Comes with a 48-page rulebook, 46"x19" map, 1080 counters, playaids, and two dice.

### FOR AUTO-COMBAT GAMES

**The Gauntlet** (Task Force, 40pp, \$7.95) by Aaron Allston. An Autoventures solo module. "An all-new underground training and amusement park for auto-combatants."

### FOR CAR WARS

**Car Wars Deluxe Edition** (Steve Jackson, boxed, \$16.95) by Chad Irby and Steve Jackson. Comes with a 64-page rulebook, 300 counters, road sections, three 32"x21" maps, two turning keys, and vehicle record sheets.

**Dueltrack** (Steve Jackson, boxed, \$14.95) by Scott Haring. Comes with a 40-page rulebook, 115 counters, and six sheets of road sections. Covers internal combustion engines, metal armor, vehicle construction, weapons list, specialty racing vehicles, racing tires, trucks and buses, scenarios, etc.

### FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

**Commander's SSD Book 8** (Task Force, 48pp, \$4.95) by the Amarillo Design Bureau. Covers ships of the Klingons, Romulans, Lyrans, Orions, and the Lyran Democratic Republic.

### BOARDGAMES

**Balderdash: The Hilarious Bluffing Game** (TSR, boxed, \$27.75) by Gameworks Creations. "Players try to bluff each other by creating phony definitions for some of the zaniest, most unbelievable words in the English language." For 2-6 players, comes with instructions, a 23"x7" board, six playing pieces, a die, 500 cards, and definition sheets.

**The Honeymooners Game** (TSR, boxed, \$19.95). A 2-6 player game based on the classic TV

show. The object is to become the "Complete Ralph Kramden" by collecting your Best Friend (Norton), your Pool Cue, your Raccoon Cap, and a Promotion from the Bus Company. Comes with instructions, 20"x20" board, two decks of cards, six playing pieces, and two dice.

**Duel** (TOME, boxed, \$8.95) by Lawrence Flournoy. A card dueling game for two players simulating a classic fencing match. Comes with instructions, two metal miniatures, 17"x3" board, 58 cards, and a die.

### FOR SHERLOCK HOLMES CONSULTING DETECTIVE

**Volume 2: Meurtres a Carlton House** (Jeux Descartes, folder, 89 Fr.) by Gary Grady, et al. French edition of Sleuth's *The Mansion Murders*.

### GAMEBOOKS

**Adventure Gamebook 7: Sceptre Of Power** (TSR, 192pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Morris Simon. "Sceptre Of Power begins the adventures of young Carr Delling, son of the powerful Archmagus Landor, as he searches for the magical legacy that will return peace to his native Tikandia."

**Adventure Gamebook 8: Nightmare Realm of Baba Yaga** (TSR, 192pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Roger E. Moore. "Somehow you must enter the mysterious Dancing Hut of the powerful sorceress, Baba Yaga, and recover the magical gemstone, the Sage Beryl."

### 1-ON-1 ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS

**The Amber Sword of World's End** (TSR, two 160pp booklets, \$5.95) by Michael P. Price. "One of you becomes Garth, a monk, Master of the North Wind. The other is his rival, Uthrac, a powerful warrior. The two of you have been sent on a quest to the perilous place known as World's End to try and gain possession of the magical Amber Sword."

### ENDLESS QUEST BOOKS

**Book 32: Prisoner Of Elderwood** (TSR, 160pp pocketbook, \$2.25) by Bruce Algozin. Based on *Dungeons & Dragons*. "Imprisoned by conquering King Cradack, you, Redmond Longbow, are forced to strike a strange bargain with the evil king. If you are successful, you will gain not only your own freedom but that of your oppressed countrymen. But if you fail. . ."

### MINIATURES

**Off-the-Wall Armies** (Gray Cat Castings, 3-figure packs, \$2.50).

Distributed by Task Force Games. Animal soldiers in 25mm scale.

*Frateri Diversi Romuli Remique (wolves)*

2120: Officer

2121: Footman w/Javelin & Shield

2122: Footman w/Sword & Shield

2123: Footman w/Spear

2124: Bowman Firing

2125: Bowman Advancing

*Bunrabs (rabbits)*

2130: Officer

2131: Bowman

2132: Spearman

2133: Bunrab in Plate Armor

### ACCESSORIES

**Crystal Mats: 25mm Squares** (Sleuth, rolled mat, \$15). A 48"x32" clear vinyl mat printed with a 25mm square grid. Useful for laying over existing maps to create an instant grid.

**Terrain Stamps** (Letters, boxed, \$15). Eight rubber stamps with the following designs for use on 5/8" hex maps: tree, cave, castle, mountains, forest, volcano, hills, and town.

### MAGAZINES

**Adventurer 1** (Mersey Leisure Publishing, 48pp, 90p) edited by Stephen Dillon. A British fantasy & science-fiction gaming magazine, this issue features "The Black Tower: A Rolemaster/AD&D adventure in two episodes," reviews, miniatures, letters, news, "White Fire: A Call Of Cthulhu mystery," "Psychology In Games," "Blood Loss: Effects in FRP," classifieds, etc.

**Challenge 26** (GDW, 48pp, \$3.25) edited by Loren K. Wiseman. "GDW's Magazine of Adventure Gaming." Covers *Twilight: 2000* and *Traveller*. Contains "The Baltic Coast: A Looter's Guide for *Twilight: 2000*," "Twilight Miniatures Rules," "Planetary Invasions in *Traveller*," etc.

### SOURCEBOOKS

**Siege And Fortress: A Complete Guide to the Construction, Siege and Defense of the Medieval Castle** (Ragnarok, 32pp, \$4.95) by Lewis M. Bryson. Also includes information on tools, weapons, materials, engineering, and logistics. Over 180 illustrations.

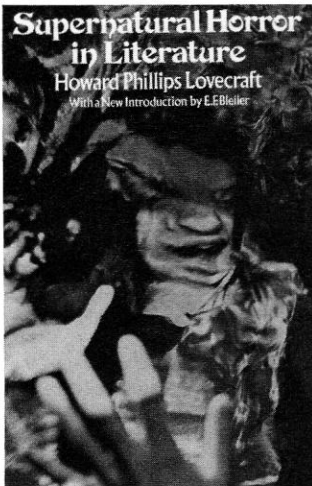
### NOVELS

#### FANTASY

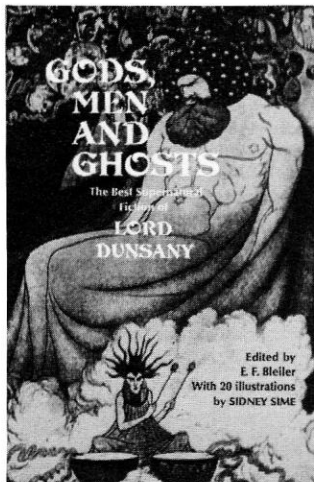
**DragonLance Legends Volume 2: War of the Twins** (TSR, 387pp pocketbook, \$3.95) by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. "Escaping the doomed city of Istar, Raistlin—now a wizard of



# HORROR & THE SUPERNATURAL

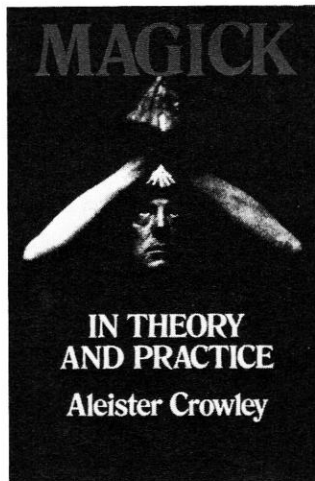


**Supernatural Horror in Literature** by H.P. Lovecraft. The greatest American supernaturalist of this century brilliantly surveys the genre into the 1920's with discussions and evaluations of scores of books and such authors as Poe, M.R. James, Bierce, Lord Dunsany, and Arthur Machen. By charting so completely the background of his own concepts of horror and literary techniques, Lovecraft throws light on his own fiction as well as on the horror-literature which has followed in his influential wake. For this reason this book will be especially intriguing to those who have read and enjoyed Lovecraft's fiction as an isolated phenomenon. Those and other readers, searching for a guide through the inadequately marked regions of literary horror, need search no longer. (DO-20105-8 softcover 111pp \$2.95)

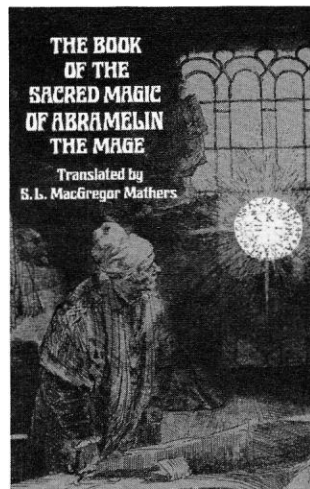


**Gods, Men and Ghosts** by Lord Dunsany. Among the great masters of supernatural and science fiction of the 20th century is the Irish writer Edward J.M.D. Plunkett, 18th Baron

Dunsany. An outstanding dramatist whose supernatural plays anticipated the theatre of the absurd, a virtuoso writer of short stories and essays, he was one of the most original talents in English literature. In addition to being one of the great formative influences in the development of the supernatural genre, he was also the author of many of the best fantastic tales in the language. Here are the finest of Lord Dunsany's works gathered from sources long out of print—"Three Sailors' Gambit," the remarkable trilogy about Nuth and the Gnoles, "The Gods Of Pagana," and other masterpieces. (DO-22808-8 softcover 260pp illustrated \$4.95)



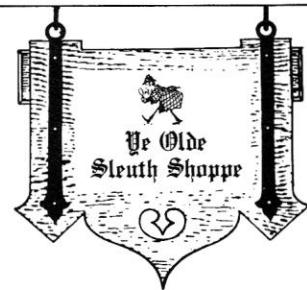
**Magick: In Theory and Practice** by Aleister Crowley. This is the foremost book on ceremonial magic written in the 20th century, the summation of the thought and life practice of the century's most famous necromancer and one of its most infamous figures. It was prepared by Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) specially for neophytes. Written at the height of his involvement, it is probably Crowley's best book. The magical theory of the universe, ritual, elemental weapons, the Holy Graal, Abrahadabra, the gestures, Our Lady Babalon and The Beast, bloody sacrifice, purifications, the oath, charge to the spirit, clairvoyance, divination, dramatic rituals, black magic, and alchemy are among the many topics covered. An extensive system of appendices provides many rituals, consecrations, correspondences, readings, and other accessory material. Crowley's graphs and charts illustrate the text. (DO-23295-6 softcover 436pp \$6.50)



**The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage** translated by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. Around the turn of the century, when Aleister Crowley was working out his system of Magick, the source that he turned to for basics was the system of Abramelin of Egypt. Abramelin, whose system is based mostly on Hellenistic theurgy of the Iamblichan sort, but with Jewish increments from the Cabala, explains the qualifications needed to become a magician, purifications and asceticisms to be practiced month by month, studies and activities permitted during this period, selection of place and time for working magic, equipment needed, prayers and formulas, evocation of good and evil spirits, commanding spirits to do one's will, overcoming rebellious spirits, and similar material. Specific instructions are offered to develop such powers as clairvoyance, divining metals and treasures, warding off evil magic, healing illness, levitation, transportation, rendering oneself invisible, creating illusions and glamour, reading minds, placing compulsions, working black magic, and a host of other abilities. (DO-23211-5 softcover 268pp \$5.00)

**La-Bas (Down There)** by J.K. Huysmans. At the novel's center is Durtal, a writer obsessed with the life of one of the blackest figures in history, Gilles de Rais—child murderer, sadist, necrophile, and practitioner of all the black arts. The book's authentic, extraordinarily detailed descriptions of the Black Mass have never been surpassed. (DO-22837-1 softcover 287pp \$4.95)

**Against The Grain (A Rebour)** by J.K. Huysmans. Because of his extreme sensitivity to the absurd and grotesque in human affairs,



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the protagonist of this masterpiece of decadence has estranged himself from society and savors the most bizarre aspects of human existence in his quest for novelty. This landmark novel is filled with weird images and biting wit. (DO-22190-3 softcover 206pp \$3.95)

**Tales of Terror and the Supernatural** by Wilkie Collins. Collins's ventures into the realm of the half-dead, explorations of strange psyches and uncanny turn of chance have been compared with the works of LeFanu and Poe. These 12 eerie tales will not easily be forgotten. (DO-20307-7 softcover 294pp \$4.95)

**Little Novels** by Wilkie Collins. Fourteen stories from Collins's later period include ghost, mystery, and problem stories characterized by deftly drawn characters and ingeniously complicated plots. Collins admirers and lovers of short fiction will welcome these hard-to-find tales. (DO-23506-8 softcover 244pp \$5.95)

**The First Book of Ghost Stories: Widdershins** by Oliver Onions. Oliver Onions (1873-1961) was one of the few truly great ghost writers. Here are eight superb tales of terror and the supernatural, including "The Beckoning Fair One," considered the best single ghost story in English. (DO-23608-0 softcover 206pp \$4.50)

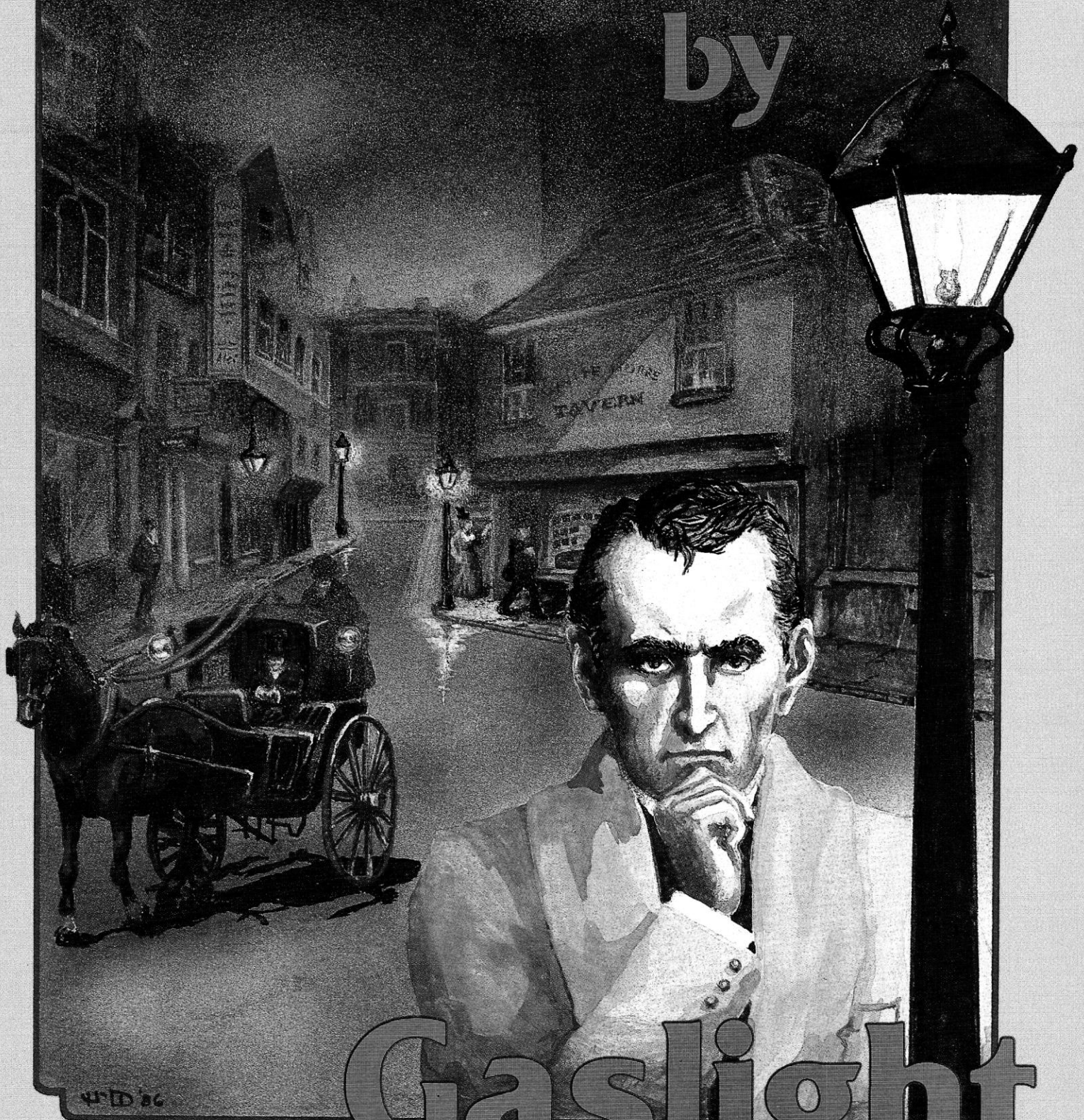
**Five Victorian Ghost Novels** edited by E.F. Bleiler. Reprinted here are five great classics of the supernatural genre: *The Uninhabited House*, Mrs. Riddell; *The Amber Witch*, J. Meinhold; *Monsieur Maurice*, Amelia Edwards; *A Phantom Lover*, Vernon Lee; and *The Ghost of Guir House*, Charles W. Beale. (DO-22558-5 softcover 421pp illustrated \$6.50)

**Ghost and Horror Stories of Ambrose Bierce.** Reminiscent of Poe, the Gothic novel, and the Romantic short story, but having an unmistakable individuality all their own, these 23 tales are vividly imagined, strangely prophetic, and decades ahead of their time in technical skill. (DO-20767-6 softcover 199pp \$3.95)

**The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle.** Fifteen masterfully-plotted stories. (DO-23725-7 softcover 256pp \$4.95)



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# New Games In Print

Latest games of interest to adventure gamers. Game publishers are encouraged to send samples of their new releases for announcement in this column.

## ROLE-PLAYING

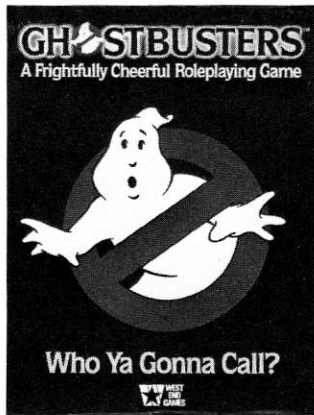
**Behind Enemy Lines: World War II Role-Playing Game** (Companions, boxed, \$20) by William H. Keith, Jr., et al. New edition of a game originally published by FASA. Comes with a 32-page Soldier's Handbook, a 32-page Commander's Manual, a 16-page Operations book, an Infantry Reference Data sheet, and three dice.

**By The Gods: Adventure in the Realm of Myth** (Ragnarok, boxed, \$6.95) by David F. Nalle. Comes with a 16-page rules booklet and a 40-page "A Complete Gamer's Pantheon!" booklet. "... recreates the world of classical myth, allowing players to become minor gods as they pursue adventures and rise in stature within their pantheon." Includes three adventures.

**Call Of Cthulhu: Fantasy Role-Playing in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft** (Hobby Japan, boxed, 4500 yen) by Sandy Petersen. Japanese language edition of Chaosium's gothic-horror game.

**Delta Force: America Strikes Back!** (Task Force, boxed, \$15.95) by William H. Keith, Jr. "The role-playing game of a fictional elite anti-terrorist commando unit based on the U.S. Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta." Comes with a 48-page Rules of Play, a 40-page Warbook, a 32-page Scenarios book, a Referee Screen, and two dice.

**Ghostbusters: A Frightfully Cheerful Roleplaying Game** (West End, boxed, \$15.95) by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis. Based on the *Ghostbusters* movie. For 2-6 players plus Ghostmaster. Comes with a 24-page Training



manual, a 64-page Operations Manual, player handouts, 42 equipment cards, twelve ID cards, and six dice. "Who Ya Gonna Call?"

**The Keepers Of Lingusia** (Cliffhanger, 106pp, \$4) by Tori Bergquist. A *Tunnels & Trolls*-based system and world description. Covers combat, monster ratings, life after death, magic, the nations of Lingusia, the bestiary, demons, dragons, undead, etc.

**MechWarrior: The BattleTech Role Playing Game** (FASA, 144pp, \$12) by Adventure Architects, et al. Covers the history of human space from the year 2001 to 3025, creation of MechWarrior characters, the crests, colors, uniforms, and equipment of the Successor States, combat, damage, events and encounters, economy, etc.

## FOR ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

**A1-4: Scourge of the Slavelords** (TSR, 128pp + 16pp map booklet, \$15) by David Cook, et al. Campaign adventure for character levels 7-11. Contains the revised *Aerie of the Slavelords* adventure series. "Also included are new challenges and scenarios detailing the Wild Coast, the city of Highport, the blasted lands of the Pomarj and the Drachensgrab Mountains."

**CA2: Swords Of Deceit** (TSR, 40pp + 32"x21" map, \$10) by Stephen Bourne, et al. For 4-5 characters of levels 10-15. Designed for the *Lankhmar: City Of Adventure* setting. "Whose life will be lost this night—a lonely wench abandoned in the street? Perhaps a young noblewoman betrayed by her family? You can find out, as you venture into the ... winding streets of Lankhmar."

**DL12: Dragons Of Faith** (TSR, folder, \$10) by Harold Johnson and Bruce Heard. A DragonLance adventure for character levels 9-10. Comes with a 64-page book, a 32"x21" map, 148 counters, eight character cards, and 55 Talis cards. Includes optional *Battle System* miniature rules.

**I8: Ravagers Of Time** (TSR, 24pp, \$8) by Graeme Morris & Jim Bimbra. For 6-10 characters of levels 8-10. "Death has always hung heavy over this mire, but now an ancient evil has returned to haunt the mist. . . You who have faced death a thousand times, meet it now in its most terrible guise. Can you defeat it, or will you fall victim to the Ravager of Time?"

**Best of Dragon Magazine Vol. V** (Dragon Publishing, 80pp, \$4.50) edited by Roger Moore and Kim Mohan. Selected articles from out-of-print *Dragon* magazines. "Barbarian cultures, guidelines for wishes, the gods and societies of the humanoids. . . Each article has been re-edited for clarity, and the Astral Plane article contains entirely new material, never before published."

**Fez IV: Wizard's Revenge** (Role Aids, 32pp, \$7) by James Robert and Len Bland. For 4-8 characters of levels 3-8. Fourth in a series of six adventures featuring the Chaotic/Good Fez, Wizard of Time Travel.

**War Of Darkness** (Role Aids, 32pp + maps, \$7) by Mark Perry. For 4-6 characters of levels 12-14. "The armies of evil lurk throughout the land. It is up to you to put an end to this war of darkness. There is no turning back."

## FOR ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS AND YSGARTH

**Uttgarth Six: Challenge of the Toymaker** (Ragnarok, 8pp, \$3.95) by Ben Fleming. For character levels 8-16. "... a group of high-level characters enter the Challenge of the Toymaker to see if they can survive to attain power and glory and bring Spielsatzenbrachen the Toymaker back to Uttgarth."

## FOR AFTERMATH

**K1: The Empire Of Karo** (FGU, 24pp, \$5) by William Pixley. A multi-adventure with a campaign background based in the area of Cairo IL. Scenarios include a vari-

ety of adventure types in the ruins of St. Louis which is frequently visited on scavenging expeditions by the bolder general merchants of Karo.

## FOR ARDUIN GRIMOIRE

**Vol. IV: The Lost Grimoire** (Dragon Tree, 100pp booklet, \$9.95) by David A. Hargrave. "Spells, conjurations, and ritualistic incantations, arcane alchemical procedures and concoctions; mystik artifacts of awesome and awful power; horrid creatures and monsters from legend and nightmare; strange new character races; a compendium of some of the nastiest and sneakiest ruses. . ."

**Vol. V: Dark Dreams** (Dragon Tree, 80pp booklet, \$8.50) by David A. Hargrave. Covers death, the fog of war, street gangs, the infamous "black" metals, the silk of arachnid origins, alchemy, more magik, prismatic walls, gladiators, mini-dracs, new monsters, etc.

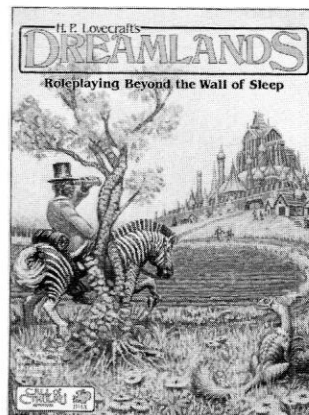
## FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

**H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands: Roleplaying Beyond the Wall of Sleep** (Chaosium, boxed, \$24.95) by Sandy Petersen, et al. Comes with a 40-page Dreamlands book, a 72-page Dream Journeys book containing six scenarios, a 29"x21" map, and handouts. Covers entering Dreamlands, new spells, creatures, and Dreamland places.

## FOR CHAMPIONS

**Supplement 1: Gadgets!** (ICE, 40pp, \$8) by Andrew M. Robinson. "Includes personal weapons, protective gear, movement aids, squad-level weapons and gear, and security equipment!"

**Adventure 5: The Coriolis Effect** (ICE, 32pp, \$6) by Dennis Maloney. A series of linked adven-



tures revolving around a new heroine.

## FOR DC HEROES

**Countdown To Armageddon** (Mayfair, 40pp + playaids, \$7) by Dan Greenberg. "Can (Superman) keep the earth from falling apart, discover the fiendish plot behind it all, use his super-computer in the Fortress of Solitude to find a solution, and still make his 6:00 newscast as Clark Kent?"

**Four Horsemen of Apokolips** (Mayfair, 40pp, \$7) by Troy Denning. For 4-6 characters of 2000-4000 hero points. "Dark-seid, the Dark Lord of Apokolips, has taken four men of knowledge and power and transformed them into Incarnations of Doom. Their mission: to destroy Earth. Then Darkseid will plunder the dead world for the ultimate key to power: the anti-life equation!"

**Eternity, Inc.** (Mayfair, 32pp, \$7) by Lawrence Schick. For 4-6 characters of 1000-2000 hero points. Features Infinity Inc., a professional hero group of the sons and daughters of the Justice Society of America who must battle villains in the La Brea Tar Pits, the Dragon Caves of Austria, and the foothills of the Andes.

## FOR DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

**M2: Vengeance Of Alphaks** (TSR, 32pp, \$8) by Skip Williams. A Master Game adventure for character levels 28-32. "This is an adventure of politics and diplomacy, of treachery and treason. Only courageous and bold action can save Norwold from the horrors of war and liberate its people from oppression."

## FOR FLASHING BLADES

**High Seas** (FGU, 41pp, \$6) by Mark Pettigrew. A complete mini-campaign set amidst the pirates of the Spanish Main. Four scenarios plus notes on personal combat, ranks & positions in the New World, pirates & privateers, ship building, trade & combat, etc.

## FOR GHOSTBUSTERS

**Ghost Toasties** (West End, 24pp + screen, \$7.95) by Scott Haring. For 2-6 players. "... demons, player handouts, pocket universes, magic crystals, cartoon hucksters, ..."

## FOR HARN

**Gods Of Harn: The Libram of the Pantheon** (Columbia, 64pp + play aids, \$13) by N. Robin Crossby, et al. A module for the fantasy world of Kethira. Provides information about the beliefs, religious rituals, and internal organizations of the churches of the ten gods.

**Azadmere: Kingdom of the Dwarves** (Columbia, 32pp + maps, \$10) by N. Robin Crossby, et al. Covers the kingdom and city of Azadmere, the Khuzdul dwarves, the human city of Habe, and the royal stronghold of Zerhun. Reprint of *Encyclopedia Harnica 1 and 16*.

**Kingdom Of Rethem** (Columbia, 48pp + maps, \$13) by Tom Dalglish, et al. A feudal kingdom in western Harn with a violent, unstable history and a tradition of political intrigue, civil war, and assassination. Covers the region of Rethem, the royal castle of Shostim, the seat of Tormau, the ruined stronghold of Kustan, the warrior tribes of Kubora, the independent tribes of Urdu, etc.

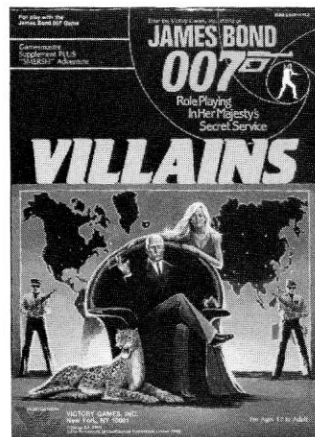
**Continent Of Lythia** (Columbia, 48pp + maps, \$13) by N. Robin Crossby. An overview of the planet Kethira and the continent on which Harn is situated. Includes notes on the languages spoken on Lythia.

**Kingdom Of Kandy** (Columbia, 48pp + maps, \$13) by Tom Dalglish, et al. The feudal kingdom in southwestern Harn with hostile neighbors to the north. Covers the region of southern Tharba, the royal castle of Dyrysa, the fortress of Menekod, the Earthmaster site of Tesien, and two island tribal nations.

## FOR JAMES BOND 007

**Villains** (Victory, boxed, \$15.95) by Neil Randall. Contains a 72-page Villains book, a 32-page SMERSH book, and an envelope containing classified information. Seven new and original major villains as well as a complete updating of SMERSH, including its leaders, purposes, and in-depth descriptions of its top assassins.

**James Bond 007 Assault Game** (Victory, boxed, \$14.95) by Gerard Christopher Klug. Can be used as a two-player, stand-alone boardgame. Simulates the assault on the secret rocket base from the *You Only Live Twice* movie.



Comes with a 20-page rulebook, a 32"x22" map, 267 counters, a range stick, two 10-sided dice, and a counter storage tray. Includes four scenarios.

## FOR MARVEL SUPER HEROES

**MHAC9: Realms Of Magic** (TSR, folder, \$12) by Kim Eastland. Comes with a 40-page Manual of Magic, a 40-page Manual of Mysticism, a 16-page Codex of Characters & Creatures, and playaids. "Within this work the mysteries of Marvel magic are revealed. . . More than twenty mystic dimensions are described. Full details are provided on the most important magical items. . ."

## FOR OTHER SUNS

**Alderson Yards Shipbook** (FGU, 48pp, \$7) by Niall C. Shapero and Steven S. Crompton. A catalog of spacecraft for personal or commercial usage.

## FOR PARANOIA

**Clones In Space** (West End, 48pp, \$7.95) by Erick Wujcik. Adventure for 2-6 Troubleshooters. "Instead of the daily humdrum life-or-death routine of Alpha Complex, in this adventure the Troubleshooters get to do something really exciting—explore Outer Space!" Includes an introductory solo-excursion.

## FOR PENDRAGON

**The King Arthur Companion** (Chaosium, 174pp, \$20) by Phyllis Ann Karr. Reprint of a book originally published by Reston.

## FOR STORMBRINGER

**The Octagon Of Chaos** (TOME, 56pp, \$10) by Tony Fiorito. For 4-6 moderately experienced players each with two characters of moderate skill levels.

## FOR TOON

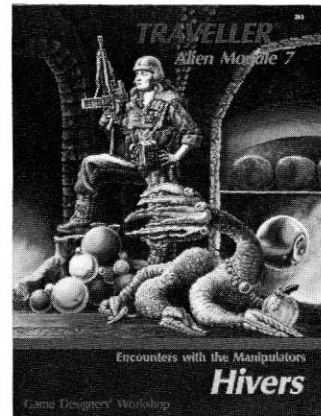
**Toon Strikes Again** (Steve Jackson, 40pp, \$5) by Warren Spector. Four adventures and a selection of characters.

**Toon Silly Stuff** (Steve Jackson, 40pp, \$5) by Allen Varney, et al. "A Cartoon Compendium of Crazy Locations, Characters, Adventure Ideas, and Tables to Aid Animators Everywhere."

## FOR TRAVELLER

**Book 8: Robots** (GDW, 56pp, \$6) by Joe D. Fugate, Sr. Covers the history of robots in the Imperium, robots of other races, rules for construction, encounter and generation tables, etc.

**Alien Realms: Eight Excursions Beyond Human Space** (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by Timothy B. Brown and J. Andrew Keith. Eight adventures for Zhodani, Aslan,



Vargr, Droyne, and human player-characters.

**Alien Module 6: Solomani** (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by Marc W. Miller and John Harshman. "Self-Proclaimed Champions of Human Supremacy." Provides Solomani history and culture, character generation, sector map, encounters, starships, and an adventure.

**Alien Module 7: Hivers** (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by J. Andrew Keith, et al. "Encounters with the Manipulators." Covers Hiver society, psychology, and history, character generation, world generation, encounters, starships, and an adventure.

## FOR TWILIGHT: 2000

**U.S. Army Vehicle Guide** (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by Frank Chadwick & Loren Wiseman. Provides game stats for all combat vehicles in U.S. service in the year 2000, a global order of battle, pre-war tables of organization and equipment, hints on modeling vehicles for use in miniature games, etc.

**Going Home** (GDW, 48pp + map, \$7) by Loren K. Wiseman. "... the players are presented with the challenge of getting across most of Poland and north-central Germany to catch the last ship heading back to the U.S. for quite a while."

**Red Star/Lone Star** (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by William H. Keith, Jr. "The adventure deals with a group of American soldiers along the Texas gulf coast late in the year 2000, dealing with the different factions vying for control of Texas as they try to rescue a kidnapped oilman and his wife."

## FOR VILLAINS & VIGILANTES

**Battle Above the Earth** (FGU, 18pp + counters, \$6) by Steven Crow. For six characters of levels 4-6. Involves the rescue of a space station, an impending alien invasion, and outer space skirmishes.

**Search for the Sensei** (FGU, 31pp + counters, \$6) by Joseph W. Liotta. An adventure involving

Continued on page 38

# FILM REVIEWS

RAW DEAL  
FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR  
HOWARD THE DUCK

Reviewed by John Nubbin

## RAW DEAL

Director . . . . . John Irvin  
Producer . . . Martha Schumacher  
Screenplay . . . Gary M. DeVore/  
Norman Wexler  
Music . . . . . Tom Bahler  
Photography . . . Alex Thomson,  
B.S.C.

## CAST

Kaminski . . . . . Arnold  
Schwarzenegger  
Monique . . . . Kathryn Harrold  
Shannon . . . . Darren McGavin

cautious. One of the films they got real cautious over, with good reason, was *Raw Deal*.

Arnold Schwarzenegger tries hard—no one could ever deny that. He scared everyone in *Terminator*, and excited everyone in *Commando*, but doesn't do much of either here. It isn't his fault though one can sense he is following his instructions perfectly. The fault lies with the script. What is being pushed here is the Schwarzenegger image—shoot off guns, punch in faces, kick in groins, wreck some cars, and kill a lot of people, and everyone will have a good time. Didn't work. Even the most infantile violence fan likes to have some idea as to why the people on screen are doing what they are doing. In *Commando*, we know the hero's motivation throughout. Here, however, sort of an excuse is made, which sort of makes sense; sort of, but not really.

Although the picture begins with a set of great hooks which drag the audience in immediately and completely, it isn't long before the twists in logic start to ruin everyone's good time. Coupling this with the needlessly foolish villains, the totally inept marksmen they hire to protect them, and the godawful bits of story such as Schwarzenegger going to kill a man simply to get in good with the mobs, or his healing of the sick in the movie's incredibly maudlin ending, you have just another ready-mix, non-varying formula movie, the kind people are, luckily, going to see less and less of as the years drag by.

## FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR

Director . . . . . Randal Kleiser  
Producer . . . . . Robby Wald/  
Dimitri Villard  
Screenplay . . . Michael Burton/  
Matt MacManus  
Music . . . . . Alan Silvestri  
Photography . . . James Glennon

## CAST

David Freeman . . . . . Joey Cramer  
Helen Freeman . . . . . Veronica  
Cartwright  
Carolyn McAdams . . . . . Sarah  
Jessica Parker  
Dr. Faraday . . . . . Howard Hesseman

AT THE time of this writing, *The Flight of the Navigator* hasn't been in the theaters long enough for anyone to judge how it will do overall; one can only hope that it

will do exceptional business. The only thing Hollywood understands is box office returns, plain and simple. If something makes money, it must be good. Do ten more just like it. Ten more just like *Navigator* might not be such a bad thing.

In this film, young Joey Cramer is spirited off the planet by an independently sentient spaceship. It uses him as its navigator and then returns him to Earth with no memory of what has happened. The only problem is that it does not return Joey to his correct time. Thus Joey wakes up in a world eight years in the future from the one he knew. It is a heartbreaker of a story, one about a shattered family and a lost boy, trying to discover what has happened to each other. It is also about an alien/human relationship.

The dealings between the ship and the boy are first rate; the alien factor is not as complex as one might find in a C.J. Cherryh novel, but is different enough to

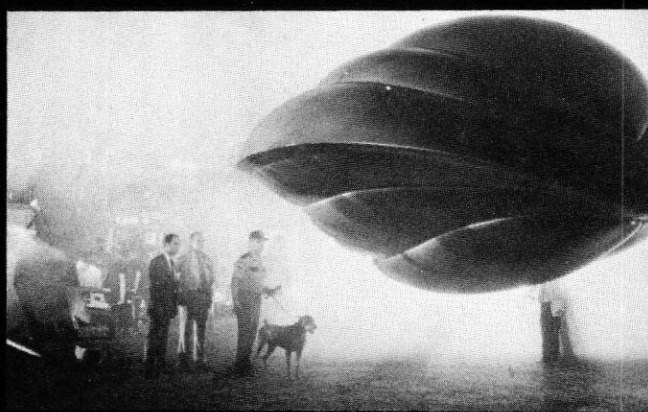
show that people were indeed trying. As does the science. The film has its share of special effects, true enough, but for once, the effects have been delegated to the background. They never interfere with what is happening within the story, and more importantly, they never exceed the boundaries of natural law as we know it. The screenwriters have made good use of recent breakthroughs and theories. The ship obeys all the science within our current grasp quite nicely, without once sacrificing truth for special effects.

All in all, *The Flight of the Navigator* is one of the best science-fiction films in quite some time. It borders on the cute, true enough, but borders only. It suffers from none of the terminal "smiley face" writing, or directing, or mugging on the part of the cast which has sent so many Disney films down the tubes since Uncle Walt passed on, leaving his studio in the hands of people who



THE SUMMER is gone, and with it another rolling wave of rotten, childish, boring garbage, from the networks, the cable companies, the music world, and, of course, from Hollywood. Summer is the time children are not in school, and since, as everyone knows, children have no brains at all, we (the creators) can just sit back and take it easy. No need to think about the product we supply for three months; after all—it's summer. The little geeks will do anything to get out of the house.

Well, maybe, maybe not. This summer was an all-time box office low for the theaters (following last summer's all-time box office low), one which implies that people, little kids and all, have had it with junk. With theaters in some areas charging \$6.00 a shot for everyone over twelve, people have started growing a little



Joey Cramer stars as 12-year-old David Freeman (above), who has an adventure aboard the most fantastic hot rod in the universe—an extraordinary spacecraft from another galaxy. Below, scientists first make contact with the spacecraft.

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were business men first and dreamers second—instead of the other way around. If it's still in your area, see it without hesitation. If not, then consider this film just another reason to finally buy that VCR you've been thinking about getting.

## ALIENS

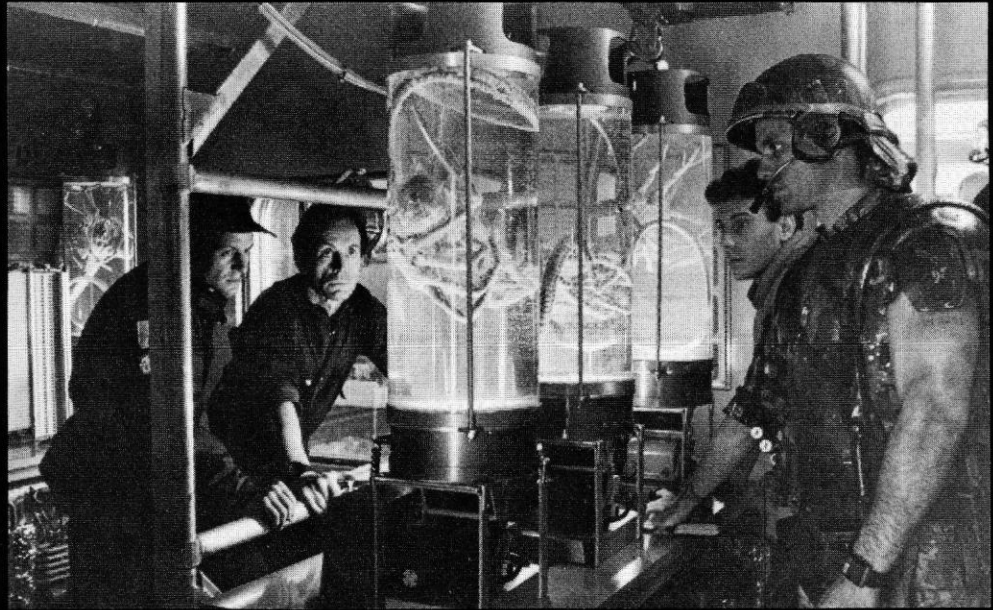
Director . . . . . James Cameron  
 Producer . . . . . Gale Anne Hurd  
 Screenplay . . . . . James Cameron  
 Music . . . . . James Horner  
 Photography . . . . . Adrian Biddle

### CAST

Ripley . . . . . Sigourney Weaver  
 Corp. Hicks . . . . . Michael Biehn  
 Burke . . . . . Paul Reiser

**THEY'RE BACK!** Meaner and nastier and uglier than ever . . . *The Aliens!!!* Oh, gosh, what to do? Obviously exactly the same things we did with them the first time. Never tamper with success in Hollywood.

*Aliens* is fast-paced, rocket-like in its race to the finish. The action is top-notch; the special effects are superb. If shooting and exploding and running from monsters and people being torn apart and exploding themselves into bits and killing, killing, killing is enough to keep you happy, then this is your film. If you want some story to go with it, though, I'm sorry to say you're fresh out of luck with this one.



In the Colony's Med Lab, (left to right) Gorman (William Hope), Bishop (Lance Henriksen), Burke (Paul Reiser) and Hicks (Michael Biehn) inspect the Stasis Tubes containing alien "face-huggers."

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Lack of space prevents us from going into a lot of detail, but luckily this film doesn't need much room from us. The problem is a basic one—absolutely nothing new happens in this movie. It has the same plot as the first one, almost the entire way along, certainly throughout the last two-thirds. It is filled with holes and foolish bits of the "special effects over logic" credo which seems to encompass so much of the science-fiction filmmaking going on today.

Why doesn't Ripley's arm tear off at the end of the film? Why can't the highly advanced senses of the mother alien allow her to find the child beneath her feet? Why does Ripley bother to fire the egg chamber and enrage the mother alien when she knows in a matter of minutes the whole area is going to be blown to smithereens? Why doesn't Ripley tell the Space Marines what it is they are going in against?

The list is longer, much longer, but there is no point in displaying it. *Aliens* was made for a low-grade audience—any gamemaster who invited his friends back to play an updated version of an adventure game who did nothing more than give both sides more power while proceeding to run the exact same scenario would not have too many takers, at least not in this neck of the woods.

*Aliens* is great escapist fare; no argument. But it was not very intelligently written. There are no surprises; there is nothing within the film which challenges even its youngest viewer to think. It is a trite film. There is no doubt it will make a great deal of money, and that it will excite a great number of people for a few months. But in the end it will be forgotten—completely. If the

school of film making such deceptive trash could be forgotten as well, we would all be a lot better off.

## HOWARD THE DUCK

Director . . . . . Willard Huyck  
 Producer . . . . . Gloria Katz  
 Screenplay . . . . . Gloria Katz/  
 Willard Huyck  
 Music . . . . . John Barry  
 Photography . . Richard H. Kline,  
 A.S.C.

### CAST

Beverly Switzer . . . . . Lea Thompson  
 Dr. Jennings . . . . . Jeffrey Jones  
 Phil Blumhardt . . . . . Tim Robbins  
 Howard T. Duck . . . . . Ed Gale/et al

WHAT CAN one say? People either loved this one, or hated it. We didn't hate it. There simply was no reason to. One woman at our showing actually went into a mild hysterical shock. She was actually screaming in the theater that films so violent and disturbing and twisted shouldn't be made for children to see. Howard the Duck violent? Twisted? We left thinking that maybe she had missed the point.

Most everyone knows Howard's story—torn from his own world through a dimensional rift, he gets kicked around by humanity, stands up and refuses to take it anymore, meets and falls for a human girl who falls for him, and they go on from there, trying to maintain a relationship and be left alone.

While the movie has changed a great number of details about Howard from the comic to the screen, the one thing left intact was the attitude which made Howard such a fan favorite in the



Howard T. Duck, being arrested at Dynatechnics. Copyright © 1985 Universal City Studios, Inc.

first place. When Howard was a comic star, the thing that shot him to the top was his way of dealing with things, and that has not changed. He is still the cynical, hard-bitten, quick-tempered, hard-on-everyone-else-and-hard-on-himself duck he always was. The joy of the character is in the honesty which guides it. This was intact.

Also intact from the comic book pages was the insanity of the human world around Howard. People acted like lunatics around him when he worked for Marvel Comics, and they kept it up on the screen for Universal Studios. In fact, everything about the comic translated quite nicely; the

Continued on page 34



*Aliens* menace Ripley (Sigourney Weaver, background) and Newt (Carrie Henn, foreground).

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Dear Tadashi,

LA ORIGINS was a blast! To the max! I was only able to make it on Saturday and it took me the entire day to see everything. The exhibitors exhibited, the gamers gamed, the hucksters hucked, the auctioneers auctioned, the dealers dealt, the collectors collected, the buyers bought, the organizers organized, the lookers looked, the caterers catered, the partiers partied, and everyone was having a great time. ALAN EMRICH & Co. should be given an award for a job very well done.

I didn't get to any meetings, seminars, or award ceremonies, though, as meeting rooms make me sleepy. But I did overhear that the Site Selection Committee got a bid from TSR to run the 1988

ORIGINS at Milwaukee in conjunction with their Gen Con. The idea sent a chill down my spine. I don't think I'd want to attend that one. ORIGINS should be held every other year in Southern California, as far as I'm concerned. And I know you'd want it in Philadelphia on the other years to get your cheesesteak fix. Stay tuned for further developments.

But I do look forward to ORIGINS 87 in Baltimore and to that celebrated southern hospitality. Love those crab cakes.

(One should not write letters on an empty stomach.)

Sleuth announces that the Japanese edition of their *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* game sold over 37,000 copies in

the first six months of its publication setting a new standard for others to follow.

Rawcliffe Corporation of Providence RI, a manufacturer of pewter keychains and figurines, has purchased the rights to manufacture and distribute Ral Partha Pewter.

Where is Pacesetter? Rumour tells me nowhere. They have one person working part-time filling orders as they come in, but no new products are expected from them.

Mayfair Games announces the upcoming release of *King Of Crime, Legion of Super-Heroes Volume 2: The Worlds, Don't Ask, Pawns Of Time, An Element of Danger, Dream Machine, H.I.V.E.* (by TROY DENNING, formerly of Pacesetter), and *Night In Gotham*, all for DC Heroes; and for use with the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game, *Pinnacle, Undead*, and *Beneath Two Suns*, the latter also by TROY DENNING and based on *Transit To Scorpio* by ALAN BURKE AKERS.

Rumour thinks TSR is unhappy with the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game line and is considering dropping it. GARY GYGAX meanwhile is starting his own company, Infinity Games, in New Jersey. Will he take the license with him?

Errata and additional scenarios for the game *Berserker* can be gotten by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Berserker Rules, c/o Flying Buffalo, PO Box 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252.

*Call Of Cthulhu* third edition? So SANDY PETERSEN of Chaosium says. Third time's the charm, says I.

Congratulations to LOU ZOCCHI. After three years of R&D, he has finally come up with the 100-sided die, dubbed the Zocchihedron. The golf ball-looking percentile die is even filled with saucer-shaped plastic pellets to break its roll after moving a suitable distance. Revolutionary.

Button of the Month: "Gamers Do It For Hours."

Is the Avalon Hill Game Company looking to sell their *Heroes* magazine? Will Diverse Talents fall for it?

West End's response to the question "Are you emphasizing in-house or freelance designs?" was "Yes."

GDW's upcoming *Twilight: 2000* releases *Armies of the Night*, set in what's left of New York City, and *Air Lords of the Ozarks*, which pits the last airships in the Allegheny Uprising against the Military Government.

*Traveller* may not be dead but Rumour says GDW is working on a new edition.

GDW also plans to publish *Air Superiority*, a modern air-combat game, designed by J.D. WEBSTER, the creator of *Fineous Fingers* and a carrier fighter pilot.

The 1986 Game Designers' Guild Select Awards went to: *Balance Of Power* (Mindscape) by CHRIS CRAWFORD, *Pax Britannica* (Victory Games) by GREG COSTIKYAN, *Pendragon* (Chaosium) by GREG STAFFORD, *Tales of the Arabian Nights* (West End) by ERIC GOLDBERG, and *Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues* (West End) by JOHN M. FORD.

Next for *Paranoia* from West End is *HIL Sector Blues*, a campaign pack including miniature rules and Cardboard Commies, *Lord of the Clones*, and *Orcbusters: Wizard Whacking in the Service of The Computer*.

Those into post-holocaust and/or wargames should be interested in West End's upcoming *Air & Armor: Battlefield Command in the Next War*, a simulation of near-future combat in a Warsaw Pact invasion of West Germany, with ten scenarios. And possibly JOHN HILL's *Tank Leader*, a platoon-level WWII game of armored tactics in the Eastern Front.

Also coming from West End is *Kings & Things: The Fantasy Boardgame With Everything!* featuring 48 terrain tiles which forms a new board every game.

ICE announces a new boxed edition of their *Middle-Earth Role Playing* game and the pending release of German, Swedish, French, and Japanese editions. Upcoming for *Middle-Earth* will be *Trolls of the Misty Mountains* and *Lords of Middle-Earth Vol. 1*. For *Rolemaster* will be the *Rolemaster Companion*. For *Space Master* will be *The Lost Telepaths*. And for the Hero System, *Robot Warriors* and *Super Agents*. Also, as of issue 8, the *Adventurer's Club* magazine will expand to carry *Middle-Earth* material.

The Avalon Hill Game Company announces the upcoming release of *Standard RuneQuest*, a low-cost version of *Deluxe RuneQuest* designed by Chaosium.

Palladium announces their upcoming releases: *Robotech*, a Japanese robots role-playing game; *Beyond the Supernatural*; *Palladium RPG Book III: Adventure on the High Seas*; and *Road Hogs*, adventures for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Why do I see Cthulhu at the end of every dollar sign?

Love,

Do what thy manhood bids thee do,  
from none but self expect applause;  
He noblest lives and noblest dies  
who makes and keeps his self-made laws.

—The Kasidah of Haji Abdu El-Yazdi  
Richard Burton (1821-90)



"IT'S NOT THAT YOUR FATHER AND I ARE CRITICIZING YOU, DEAR; IT'S JUST THAT WHEN YOU SAID YOUR NEW BOYFRIEND WAS A 'DEEP ONE' WE THOUGHT YOU MEANT AN INTELLECTUAL!"  
—Salonia

# ANNOUNCING...



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